United Nations S/PV.7793

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7793rd meeting

Tuesday, 25 October 2016, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin/Mr. Zagaynov/Mr. Hitchev	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Ms. Gerashchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Implementing the common agenda

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)

Letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/871)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

Implementing the common agenda

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822)

Letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/871)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director and co-founder of the EVE Organization for Women Development, South Sudan, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: Ms. Mara Marinaki, Principal Adviser on Gender of the European External Action Service of the European Union; Ms. Marriët Schuurman, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security; Mr. Paul Bekkers, Director of the Office of the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and Mrs. Louise Sharene Bailey, Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/822, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security.

I wish to also draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/871, which contains the text of a letter dated 14 October 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Russian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this very important meeting to discuss women's role in peace and security.

Women have a vital role to play in preventing conflict and building and maintaining peace. But, although that is now widely recognized, far too often women are prevented from fully participating in peacemaking and peacebuilding. We are all suffering from the effects of that deficit. In our interconnected world, insecurity and conflict in one country or region affects us all.

Nine years ago, I addressed the Council during its first open debate on women and peace and security (see S/PV.5766). Since then, the United Nations has made some progress in the promotion of the women and peace and security agenda. The establishment of UN-Women amplified women's voices and created momentum for women's leadership on peace and security. The Office of my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict is focusing international attention on one of

the greatest moral challenges of our time. The Council adopted new resolutions on women and peace and security. Last year's high-level reviews of our peace operations and peacebuilding architecture, and the global study on women and peace and security, spurred new commitments and determination.

When I became Secretary-General, there were four countries with national action plans on women and peace and Security; today there are 63. I personally have appointed many women as Special Envoys and Special Representatives. I also appointed the first female Force commander of a peacekeeping mission and the first female Police Adviser. Hundreds of thousands of women and girls are being helped and supported by United Nations programmes in conflict-affected countries. National and international tribunals have issued verdicts that are historic milestones for gender justice. Many countries have committed to action to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence. Perhaps most important of all, we see more inclusive peace processes and peace agreements. The Colombian peace talks included a group dedicated to gender perspectives and women's rights. More women than ever before are making decisions for peace and security in the halls of Governments and international organizations.

I am painfully aware that, despite all those steps, the situation remains far from equitable. I am ashamed of the many atrocities that continue to be committed against women and girls, including by some of our own peacekeepers. I am angered by the continued political exclusion of women. Peace processes, humanitarian programmes and peacebuilding plans ignore them and fail to meet their needs and protect their rights. Look at the pictures of peace negotiations on Syria or Yemen. There may be one woman at the table or in one delegation. That is fully representative of the general picture. And all that is against a backdrop of women and girls suffering inequalities that are aggravated by conflict, who are targeted for particularly brutal crimes by violent extremist groups, including Da'esh and Boko Haram. As we carry this agenda forward and build on past efforts, I urge members to take several specific steps.

First, I urge the Council to seek information on women and girls in all its reports and briefings on countries affected by conflict. Without relevant information, peacekeeping mandates will never meet the needs of women and girls. Too often, what is not counted does not count.

Secondly, I urge the Council to hold all United Nations peace operations accountable for putting women and girls at the centre of their work.

Thirdly, I encourage the members of the Council to listen to civil society, and in particular to women's groups, in all their deliberations on conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Fourthly, I urge the Council to make sure that there are funds available for those activities. The failure to fund this agenda is possibly the greatest obstacle we face to implementation. I call on members to earmark a minimum of 15 per cent of funding on peace and security to programmes that address the needs of women and girls, and to make full use of the new pooled fund that was created to channel more resources to women's organizations working for peace.

And, fifthly, I encourage the Council to consider ways to make peace negotiations more diverse. After more than 15 years of advocacy, that has not happened. Clearly, new ideas and stronger action are needed.

In failing to include women and girls in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, we are not only failing women and girls, we are failing the world. This agenda is not an optional extra, or a favour to women and girls. It is fundamental to building sustainable peace and ending the conflicts that are causing so much pain and damage around the world. There is more research emerging every year to demonstrate that. Let me remind the Council of one finding among many, namely, that peace accords are 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years if women are at the table.

I will never forget the strength of the thousands of women and girls whom I have met in some of the harshest places on the planet ravaged by war. I have been inspired many times by women who are working to prevent conflict and build peace, and by the sacrifice of countless women human rights defenders. I urge the Security Council to do everything possible to create the conditions for peace in our world. I will never stop, and we must never stop, in the urgent drive to bring women into their rightful place at the heart of building peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka: It is an honour to address the Security Council and to present the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) on women and peace and security on his behalf. I thank the presidency of the Russian Federation for presiding over today's debate and for proposing to review the implementation of the commitments made last year by Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations.

Last year's open debate (see S/PV.7533) had the highest number of participating speakers in the entire history of the Security Council. More than 180 political, financial and institutional commitments were made in the course of the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000), and the new resolution 2242 (2015) was adopted. Such commitments are important and can make a difference. They must therefore not simply be plans on paper; we must turn them into action. Last year's global study on women and peace and security was also welcomed as a guide that can keep our work in moving ahead. Today, therefore, we urge Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations to do more to take the study's recommendations forward and turn the commitments that were made into concrete action. The Council is well positioned to ensure we have greater accountability to one another for our commitments.

UN-Women is already responding to many of the findings and recommendations of the global study and the appeal issued in resolution 2242 (2015). We are serving as the secretariat for key new mechanisms, such as the Council's new Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. We are pleased to announce that we will also perform a secretariat function in support of the new network of national focal points.

And we are responding to last year's call for greater visibility and leadership in this area. We are therefore mobilizing high-level champions who can amplify our voice, message and presence everywhere, and ensure that the agenda on women and peace and security has the broadest possible support all over the world. We are contributing to the implementation of the peace operations review, in collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs. We are collaborating closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office and other partners in order to ensure that gender is fully reflected in the agendas on sustaining peace and on youth and peace and security. I congratulate the Peacebuilding Commission on adopting a gender strategy, a first among our intergovernmental bodies. We are also working hard to ensure that the United Nations approach to preventing and countering violent extremism engages women's leadership, and that it respects and promotes women's rights.

While there is still much more to do, this year's annual report includes several markers of progress. For the first time, the Peacebuilding Fund exceeded the 15 per cent target for funds intended directly for gender equality and women's empowerment. The percentage of female beneficiaries of temporary employment programmes has doubled since 2013, reaching 46 per cent in 2015. The percentage of peace agreements that include provisions on gender equality has increased from 22 to 72 per cent in the past five years. In the past few months we have seen several gender justice milestones in both national and international courts. In Guatemala, a national court prosecuted and convicted people on charges of sexual slavery during armed conflict, a first for a domestic court anywhere. In the past year, the International Criminal Court secured its first conviction for sexual and gender-based crimes. And in Senegal, the trial of Hissène Habré saw the first conviction of a former Head of State for personally committing rape as an international crime.

But we have many challenges remaining. The report also notes that there are many areas of concern and stagnation. The percentage of women beneficiaries of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes has declined markedly, decreasing to 12 per cent. In countries in conflict and post-conflict that have no quotas, women occupied a mere 11 per cent of seats in parliament, and their political participation has not improved significantly over the past five years. In the 12 months since resolution 2242 (2015) urged that women in civil society be asked to present briefings during the Security Council's country-specific deliberations, that commitment has not materialized.

Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations perform significantly worse in the areas of maternal mortality and education for girls. The Security Council is very aware of the atrocities committed against women and girls in war-ravaged countries. We are still counting the days since the Chibok girls were abducted. We remain concerned about the many who have not been found, in Nigeria or elsewhere. Although we welcome the fact that 21 of them have returned, we will

continue to count the days until all are released. There have also been extensive reports of abuses committed against Iraqi and Syrian women and girls trapped between Da'esh and the military operations against it, including in the current situation in Mosul. Elsewhere, South Sudanese women and girls are being raped by armed actors with total impunity, as we will no doubt hear this morning from Ms. Lopidia.

In addition to such examples of extreme violence against women, we have countless examples of women's extreme political marginalization in public life and decision-making, which must also be of concern to the Council, in view of its considerable power. In the first year of the Informal Expert Group, members of the Security Council discussed four country situations — Mali, Iraq, the Central African Republic and Afghanistan. In Mali, of the 62 Malian members of the committees in charge of monitoring and implementing the peace agreement, only one was a woman. The representation of women among the committees' international mediation members is also dismal. In Iraq, there was not a single woman in the four command cells for administering people's return to liberated areas, chaired by the Government and members of the security forces, tribal sheikhs, imams and notable community members. Since the transition ended in the Central African Republic, women's representation in national institutions has again dropped, to 8 per cent of members of parliament. In Afghanistan, the international community's huge investment in the security sector could offer women much more. Women make up less than 1 per cent of the country's armed forces and less than 2 per cent of its national police.

In many of those contexts the United Nations itself shows a similarly poor representation of women. In the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, women account for only 13 per cent of staff overall and 11 per cent of leadership positions. Such stark deficits in our own gender balance cannot continue. We need an intervention that can turn the tide. We pay a daily price for this issue in our reputation and effectiveness in the areas where we provide services. It is a challenge that the incoming Secretary-General will have to face in order to build on what has been started. We welcome his commitment to taking concrete measures to achieve gender parity within the United Nations. That would be a breakthrough that could result in a much more formidable United Nations by building on achievements so far.

Finally, I would like to end by recognizing our current Secretary-General's contribution to women and peace and security. The United Nations system has made important progress on that agenda under his leadership. We know that the issues are close to his heart and that he will continue to champion them in his future roles and whatever his new capacity will be, with the support of UN-Women. UN-Women thanks him for his commitment to women and peace and security, and we thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to brief the Council today.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Lopidia.

Ms. Lopidia: I am speaking today in my capacity as Executive Director and co-Founder of the EVE Organization for Women Development in South Sudan and on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

In my country, conflict is spreading, tribal and community tensions are mounting and more than 1.6 million South Sudanese are internally displaced. For the majority of women in South Sudan, peace and security remain a far-fetched and almost unattainable notion. Women lack protection, live in fear, are at risk of being raped daily, have almost no recourse to justice, are economically disadvantaged and live in limited freedom. Yet we stand united in our search for peace. In my role as an activist for women's rights and peace, I meet many South Sudanese women, and the stories they share with me are heartbreaking. A woman in Bentiu, Unity state, told me recently, "I have been raped several times, but I still have to go out. What option do I have? I still have to find food for my children. On a lucky day, I go out and nothing happens. On a bad day, I go out and I am raped."

I want to focus today on the critical involvement of women during all phases of peace agreements: the actions peacekeepers must take to include women in protection strategies and, overall, be more responsive to the needs of women and girls; our right to justice and accountability; and strengthening inclusive institutions and national frameworks.

I was part of the civil society delegation in Addis Ababa advocating for women's issues to be included in

the agreement and for women to participate in all parts of the peace process. It took significant advocacy for women of civil society to sit at the negotiating table. The inclusion of women's issues and the signing of the peace agreement in August 2015 gave South Sudanese women hope. However, its implementation is not guaranteed, as is evident from the violence that erupted in July. Peace and stability will not come to South Sudan if the agreement is not fully implemented.

I have just come from Nairobi where, along with South Sudanese and global partners, I convened a peace dialogue with representatives of the Transitional Government, local and global women's groups, faith-based organizations and academia. It is important that such initiatives fostering people-to-people dialogue be supported. We came together to call for an end to the violence and for all South Sudanese leaders to rise above tribal affiliations to build a peaceful national identity based on respect, diversity, personal integrity and women's inclusion. The different parties to the agreement must honour their commitments; denounce violence, including widespread sexual violence; and respect both the letter and spirit of the August 2015 agreement. The Security Council and the international community must apply all necessary pressure to ensure that the entire agreement is upheld by every side and that South Sudanese women from national and grass-roots organizations are included in its implementation and monitoring.

Women peacebuilders and civil society colleagues from Colombia have also asked me today to urge the international community to ensure that the comprehensive agreement reached in Havana is salvaged. I join them in calling for women, including Afro-Colombian and indigenous women, to continue to be part of all discussions on the future of the agreement.

Across all conflicts and crisis situations, the Security Council must also prioritize women and girls' protection. Peacekeeping missions mandated to protect civilians, including the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as humanitarian agencies, must do a better job of seeking out and listening to the needs of women and prioritizing their protection. A crucial aspect of ensuring that women are protected must involve increasing the number of women peacekeepers to enable more responsive channels for women to communicate their immediate protection concerns and overall perspectives on the security situation.

Recognizing the urgent situation in my country, the Security Council adopted resolution 2304 (2016) in August. The Security Council should not allow 2017 to arrive without the Government and opposition leaders of South Sudan meeting all the requirements set out in the new resolution, including the deployment of a regional protection force, the improvement of UNMISS peacekeeping operations and the realignment of transitional security arrangements for Juba and other major cities and deadly flash points. South Sudan is increasingly becoming a living hell for a lot of women and, in my opinion, this should not be happening on the Council's watch.

If the Government and opposition leaders of South Sudan do not meet the requirements set out in the latest Security Council resolution, then the Security Council must impose more targeted sanctions on individuals and a total arms embargo. South Sudan has one of the highest rates of arms per capita of any country worldwide, which is exacerbating the violence in my country. The Security Council's reluctance to address the ongoing impunity in South Sudan is prolonging this conflict and its devastating impact on women.

Additionally transitional justice, accountability and reconciliation are important parts of healing for South Sudanese women and for women elsewhere. The Security Council, the African Union and Member States need to support the rule of law, including the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and the appointment of women in senior roles throughout the Court. The Council must also not allow impunity to fuel further violence and atrocities. Accountability must also extend to sexual exploitation and abuse committed by all United Nations and international staff.

The situation in my country today has reached a dangerous tipping point. There is an urgent need for good governance, respect for civil society, institutional reforms and respect for women's quotas in power-sharing. South Sudan recently launched its national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), however there seems to be little or no political will to translate it to realities on the ground and so women continue to be systematically excluded from decision-making.

Women's voices not only in South Sudan, but also from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Mali, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other conflict-affected areas around the world, must be elevated. The Security Council, the Member States

and the United Nations must significantly improve their engagement with women civil society during times of crisis at Headquarters in New York and in missions, including those undertaken by Security Council members. Despite a commitment made this time last year, the Security Council has yet to invite civil society representatives to country-specific consultations.

Many other commitments were made last year during the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000), on promoting women's participation and gender equality, emphasizing conflict prevention and financing the women and peace and security agenda. Unmet commitments are just words and do nothing to bring about peace. I look forward to hearing the concrete actions that have been taken in the past 12 months to improve the lives of South Sudanese women and of other women around the world affected by conflict and to promote their inclusion in all decision-making.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Lopidia for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to begin by commending the Russian presidency for organizing this debate. We need only look around the Chamber to see the high number of delegations of Member States that are joining us today, and look further up to see all the representatives of civil society, to realize that there is a very powerful commitment on the part of the international community as a whole to the women and peace and security agenda, because, as the Secretary-General so eloquently stated, this is not a favour, but simply something we must do.

Exactly one year ago, I was in the same seat that Ambassador Churkin is sitting in now and presiding over a similar debate (see S/PV.7533). On that occasion, 113 States, showed their determination to agree to specific and tangible commitments related to the women and peace and security agenda.

But, before I move on, I would like to express my thanks to the Secretary-General for his ongoing commitment, throughout his two mandates, to the women and peace and security agenda. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women, my good friend Phumzile, and of course, Ms. Rita Lopidia for their truly exceptional briefings. Without those contributions, we would never reach our objectives.

At the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which my country had the honour of presiding over last year, it was made clear that each and every one of us have unavoidable responsibilities in that regard, and that it is up to us all to achieve results. Power and responsibility must be two faces of the same coin. I am proud to say that in the two years that Spain has been a member of the Security Council, one great and long-standing daily priority has been resolution 1325 (2000). I would like to take this opportunity to share two fundamental aspects with this forum. I shall note first what, in our view, has been accomplished in the past two years, and secondly, some improvements that my country has made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Security Council has made some very important accomplishments in the course of the last two years.

First, the creation of the Security Council Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, under the joint chairmanship of Spain and the United Kingdom, is a very innovative mechanism with regard to working methods. It provides Security Council members with the concrete information that we need regarding leadership at the United Nations. It also helps support efforts to broadly integrate gender perspective within peacekeeping missions. The experts have held meetings on Mali, Iraq, whose Ambassador I see here and with whom we have done exceptional work, the Central African Republic and Afghanistan.

Secondly, we have managed to help national administrations to make greater headway in the peace and security agenda. That is why the President of Spain announced the creation of a network of national points of contact for the resolution 1325 (2000). On September 23, Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs presided over the launching of the network. The first conference of the network of national points of contact will be held in Spain in the first trimester of 2017. We thank Germany, which will hold a similar conference the following year. Over 50 States and regional organizations are founding members of the focal points network. Moreover, as I have explained previously and in line with resolution 2242 (2015), my country is committed to a series of obligations that have truly helped advance resolution 1325 (2000) in Spain.

First of all, we have drafted a new national action plan that is very progressive and will usher in change.

Secondly, we will gradually increase the number of women deployed in peacekeeping missions. It is important to recall that as of 1999, women can ascend to all positions of the armed forces and that we give women priority so that they can participate in peacekeeping missions. I see the Colombian Ambassador here today. She knows full well that we have surpassed the 20 per cent quota in the contingent of women that will be deployed to that marvellous country. Additionally, we believe that as the number of women that participate in peacekeeping missions increases, the unfortunate instances of sexual abuse and exploitation that are, regrettably, still ongoing, will be more effectively addressed.

Thirdly, we will step up prevention and training efforts, nationally and with third States, by sharing our capacities.

Fourthly, we have welcomed the interesting Canadian initiative to create a network of military and police advisers with regard to women and peace and security. We also attended a ministerial conference of defence ministers in London last month, where we fully committed to uphold the London communiqué adopted there.

Fifthly, we must all make greater efforts in financing. We have earmarked €1 million of the 2016 budget to support exceptional instruments, such as the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, and to strengthen certain capabilities, particularly the gender units within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations or the Department of Political Affairs.

Lastly, in the humanitarian sphere, Spain has allocated €1.7 million to specific projects that will be part of the agenda, notably in Palestine, Syria and Jordan. Additionally, during the World Humanitarian Summit, my country committed, among other goals, to set up a gender marker for 100 per cent of humanitarian financing in 2018.

The agenda requires real commitment. We have the tools and we have the resolutions. Now we need to show that there is genuine political will to implement them. That is why we hope that the effective participation of women will be a priority during the next Secretary-General's mandate. I have heard him speak, I know him, and I am sure that it will be so, but resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015) represent a cause that affects us all. It is indeed a just cause, but above all it is necessary if we are to truly contribute to building a peace with a solid foundation.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her impassioned briefing. I would also like to pay tribute to the commendable efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to promote the women and peace and security agenda.

I would also like to thank Ms. Rita Lopida for her moving statement. She gave voice to the suffering of women in South Sudan. During its latest visit to Juba and Wau, the Security Council witnessed that reality with its own eyes.

This meeting is particularly important as it has been a year since the adoption of historic resolution 2242 (2015) and the issuance of the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Despite the many gains achieved on the issues of women and peace and security during the past 16 years, there is only temporary progress.

Women and girls remain the primary victims in areas of conflict. In that vein, through its current membership of the Security Council, Egypt is committed to sparing no effort in supporting and developing the women and peace and security agenda and implementing resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), thereby ensuring the protection of women in areas of armed conflict and in other situations. It should also ensure its genuine participation in maintaining and building peace. In that regard, we look forward to cooperating with Secretary-General designate António Guterres.

In line with our follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the global study, we would like to stress the following.

First, it is important to strike a balance between the two main the pillars of the women and peace and security agenda: protection and participation. The international community must pay sufficient attention to providing and delivering the necessary protection to women in conflict and post-conflict areas, in parallel with promoting women's participation, so as to ensure complementarity between both pillars. Providing protection to women is a necessary precondition for their effective participation during the post-conflict period.

Secondly, the women and peace and security agenda continues to ignore the suffering of women

under foreign occupation. Palestinian women continue to suffer under the yoke of Israeli occupation. Men are not effectively participating in the implementation of the agenda, which undermines its all-round credibility.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the gender-based structure and gender-technical expertise within the framework of the United Nations system and provide assistance to States to build their capacities within that framework, including increasing financial resources to facilitate implementing the commitments of the women and peace and security agenda and resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015).

Fourthly, it is important to coordinate all United Nations efforts, enlisting all its organs, including civil society, regional organizations and communities, to implement the recommendations of the global study. That would avoid any duplication, redundancy or controversy in carrying out such activities. We should ensure coherence, as well, between the implementation of the recommendations of the special review of resolution 1325 (2000) mandated under resolution 2122 (2013) and the recommendations included in other United Nations reviews. We should provide the necessary financial resources to establish the institutional framework, which will facilitate the follow-up to the implementation of such recommendations. In that regard, we look forward to the contributions of the Secretary-General designate to provide new proposals to develop an effective institutional framework to enhance the women and peace and security agenda in the United Nations.

Fifthly, the recent adoption by the Peacebuilding Commission of the gender strategy, as well as the Peacebuilding Fund's allocation of some of its resources to empowering women in post-conflict States, represent important albeit preliminary steps to achieve the desired goal.

Egypt recently joined the national focal point network for women and peace and security established by Spain, and participated in the foundational meeting of the network. At the regional level, Egypt has participated effectively in drafting an Arab regional strategy to implement resolution 1325 (2000) under the aegis of the League of Arab States and through cooperation with UN-Women. We have culturally tailored the women and peace and security agenda to the Arab context so that it addresses the specific situations of the Arab region, including in particular the plight of Palestinian women in the occupied territories and the role of women in combatting terrorism and extremist ideologies.

At the national level, Egypt is committed to providing gender-based training for its forces participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Other institutions are also playing a vital role in countering the adulterated religious opinions, including fatwas, issued by terrorist organizations in conflict areas, especially those affecting the status of women. Finally, the the Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development provides assistance to regions in armed conflict, and we are sensitive to the gender dimension in providing assistance.

We call for a renewal of the political and moral commitment to empowering women in conflict and post-conflict areas. Women represent the primary component in the transitional stage from conflict to development and from a fragmented community, owing to armed conflict, to a healthy one capable of moving forward and providing sustainable peace.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): I too thank our briefers and the Secretary-General for his personal commitment to advancing the Women and Peace and Security agenda.

I have four key points to make today, but frankly it is disappointing that I have to make any of them in 2016. It is my personal hope that by the time New Zealand presides over the Security Council again, there will no longer be a need for a separate women and peace and security agenda. It is also my hope that, by then, my colleagues will not feel the need to point out how special it is to thank "Madam President" because women presiding over the Council will no longer be considered a novelty. In any case, let me go back to the points that I am here to make in my national capacity.

First, the meaningful participation of women at all stages of conflict is essential to achieving sustainable peace. We know that gender equality is critical to maintaining international peace and security. We know that women and girls have a significant role to play as leaders and decision-makers in the prevention and durable resolution of conflict. As the Secretary-General mentioned, we have the data. Women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 per cent. That percentage rises to 35 per cent after 15 years. But all too often, that is not reflected in our peacebuilding activities.

On a positive note, the peace process in Colombia has provided a best-practice example of women's participation. As we have heard, Colombian women have successfully advocated for the inclusion of women and ensured that the peace process adequately addresses crucial issues, including violence against women and community displacement. That must be maintained in the ongoing dialogue towards a final peace agreement and encourage contributors to the United Nations Mission to respond to the call to deploy women.

We also commend the initiative of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, to establish a women's advisory board to ensure that the voices of Syrian women are reflected in the peace process. Unfortunately, however, such positive outcomes remain rare, and we have yet to achieve the meaningful participation of women as a natural and necessary element for all peace processes.

My second point is that the Security Council should match rhetoric with action. That includes doing better in the mandates we set for peace operations, ensuring that United Nations missions have the right specialized personnel and skills sets, and being more open-minded about who briefs the Council.

Thirdly, the United Nations system must ensure that gender perspectives are integrated across activities. Appointments across the United Nations, including at senior levels, must reflect the world around us. If not the United Nations, who will take responsibility for improved representation of women at all levels? That is especially important for those operating in conflict, fragile and post-conflict environments. We should monitor and review such issues in the Fifth Committee when we approve and fund posts. That also means deploying more women in United Nations missions. And it means ensuring that those deployed — male and female — have the knowledge and training required to respond to challenges related to a lack of gender equality or women's empowerment. That requires making greater effort within our national military and police forces. New Zealand is actively increasing the recruitment, promotion and retention of senior women within the police and the defence force. We are determined to deploy women at all levels of decision-making in conflict-resolution processes.

My final point is the need to combat conflict-related sexual violence. Like others, New Zealand condemns the use of sexual violence, including as a method of warfare, and supports measures to tackle this challenge. Ongoing United Nations leadership to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence will be essential. New Zealand has also consistently supported the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers. It is time for an honest conversation among the Secretariat, contributing countries and Member States about why this continues to be a problem, how to stop it and, when it occurs, how to respond.

New Zealand has full confidence that the Secretary-General-designate will take forward this important agenda. We appreciate the strong signals he has sent about his commitment to gender equality within the Secretariat, and his acknowledgement that full participation of women is essential to peace and prosperity.

We all benefit when the women and peace and security agenda is fully realized: the operational effectiveness of our peacekeeping missions improves, our peacekeeping efforts are more likely to take hold and we improve the chances of sustainable peace being achieved. Those are goals to which we all should aspire.

Ms. Gerashchenko (Ukraine) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the Secretary-General; Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women; and the other briefers for their remarks. We very much appreciate the recent report of the Secretary-General on the issue of women and peace and security (S/2016/822), issued in September. We approve of the activities of new structures of the United Nations, including the Informal Expert Group set up under resolution 2242 (2015) on the problems of women and peace and security, and the national coordinators in Member States dealing with questions of women and peace and security. The protection of women during armed conflicts is an international issue.

Allow me now to speak in Russian to inform the Council of the situation of Ukrainian women since the war was launched against Ukraine.

(*spoke in Russian*)

I want to appeal to citizens of the Russian Federation, that they should be able to know the real truth of the war in Donbas and of the suffering of Ukrainian women and children. Unfortunately, we have first-hand experience of the horrible effects of conflicts on women and children. The victims of Russian military

aggressions since the spring of 2014 have been millions of Ukrainian women, and the Russian Federation is fully responsible for violating human rights, both in occupied Crimea and Donbas. This was recognized by two recent resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Women and children are the most vulnerable during these conflicts. Allow me to provide a few harrowing figures. According to recent data, in Ukraine today there are 1.7 million internally displaced persons. Of those, about 900,000 are women and more than 236,000 are children. Over the past two years in Donbas, 495 women have died in the civilian population.

In this Chamber I would like to recall Yelena Lafazan, a Russian-speaking woman from Mariupol. She protected her 9-year-old daughter with her own body during the attacks in Mariupol two years ago. When she died, she had not even turned 40, and her child lost one of her limbs. In another instance, Klim Klimenko, a 3-year-old child, was protected by her mother during a shooting in Kramatorsk in February 2015. The heroism of her mother, who was not even 30 years old, saved her life. During the armed conflict launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, 68 children died and 152 children were seriously injured. It is quite possible, though, that the figure we have is incorrect because neither Ukrainian authorities nor international humanitarian organizations yet have access to the occupied territories. We therefore cannot know the exact number of the women and children who have died. That is with regard to the civilian population.

With regard to the military, since the Russian military aggression against Ukraine in Donbas began, 2,130 soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces have died, including the two women. Those soldiers were protecting their motherland from the aggressors. As a result of the war, 1,937 children have become orphans, 1,213 women have become widows, 1,975 Ukrainian mothers have lost children and 142 Ukrainian women are awaiting the return of their family members from prisons in the occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. And as a member of the Minsk Group on humanitarian questions, I wish to inform the Council that, unfortunately, the process of releasing the detained persons has been blocked, and that is being used to blackmail the Ukrainian authorities.

In this particularly difficult situation regarding violations of the rights of women and children in the occupied territories, the Russian occupying army has taken Ukrainian women as hostages. According to the Security Service of Ukraine, there are 238 Ukrainian women in prison at the moment. At the moment, 233 women have been found they either have been released, or their bodies have been identified, although five were left in prison. The most well-known Kremlin prisoner, Nadiya Savchen'ko, spent almost 2 years in a Russian prison. Another Ukrainian woman — a journalist, Maria Varfolomeyeva — was imprisoned for more than a year in Luhansk. She was freed in March of this year.

Who was exchanged for those two Ukrainian women? Russian militarymen Aleksandrov and Yerofeev were released to free Savchenko, and one Ivan Gorbunov to free Ms. Varfolomeyeva. This is a symbol of the Russian Federation's war in Donbas. Russian military personnel are fighting by killing and taking as prisoners Ukrainian women and children. Conflicts are always accompanied by violence against women and girls. We are aware of cases of trafficking in persons on temporarily occupied territories, sexual violence and exploitation, and the use of minors in military activities, which are incompatible with human rights law and unacceptable in our contemporary world and goes against the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the Russian Federation. .

Allow me now to offer a few examples. Last month we discovered a shocking fact regarding the gender element of the violence in the temporary occupied territories of Donetsk oblast. Such violence was perpetrated by members of armed gangs and terrorist groups, including fighters of the so-called Pyatnashka International Brigade of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic. That involved the setting up of establishments where minors were forced to provide sexual services. Human trafficking also took place. Foreign nationals established studios to produce child pornography, and the materials were then distributed outside of Ukraine. Furthermore, children were recruited and received military training to participate in the fighting. That is yet another example of what we are also trying to resolve in the Minsk Working Group on Humanitarian Issues.

In the prisons of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, a group of teenagers is being detained under a charge of sabotage. We have videos of their interrogations, in which tearful and frightened 14-year-old children are being threatened to the point that they allegedly confess to various offenses. The militias posted the videos on the Internet. Meanwhile, those

children are still in prison, their fate is unknown and international human rights organizations do not have access to them. According to human rights organizations, one in four persons imprisoned by the militants has been subjected to violence or has witnessed such violence. Human rights activists point out that sexual violence is being used as part of the torture regime in order to sow panic and fear.

Those facts give an idea of the real situation with regard to human rights, or, more accurately, the lack of such rights, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. More detailed information on the human rights situation in the occupied territories is very scarce. The Ukrainian authorities do not have accurate statistics, including on gender-based violence, because of the absence of Ukrainian human rights organizations in the territories controlled by the rebels. And they do not allow international human rights organizations to go there, neither the Red Cross, Médecins sans frontières nor United Nations organizations. We have been unable to gather a complete set of evidence on the incidents, including the cases of sexual violence.

In that regard, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate once again, on behalf of Ukraine, our appeal to the United Nations to include in the mandates of the appropriate bodies of the Organization the need to combat sexual violence during the provoked armed conflict in Ukraine and the Crimea. It is very important for us to have not only rhetorical support from the United Nations, but also specific actions by the Organization, so that we can genuinely assess the situation on the ground, and to have the results reflected in the Secretary-General's reports and in further recommendations.

As to specific actions by our country in the context of the problems relating to women and peace and security in the current conditions of foreign aggression against Ukraine and the occupation of part of Ukraine's territory, I would like to say the following. Ukrainian women have rallied to deal with the current situation. Female politicians, social activists, volunteers and human rights activists are working actively to re-establish peace, and their role in dealing with women and peace and security issues is extremely important and ever-growing.

I should also point out that today women make up 12 per cent of the members of the Government and the Parliament of Ukraine. They play a very active role, first and foremost in the peacemaking processes. In February 2016, the Ukrainian Government adopted a national plan of action for implementing resolution 1325 (2000). The implementation of the plan will allow us to ensure even greater participation by women in peacekeeping and decision-making in the field of national security and defence, and in further combating gender-based violence.

The aggression against Ukraine has led to greater involvement by women in the peacemaking processes, and the President of Ukraine has appointed a woman to a position in charge of the peace process in the Donbas region. We also have women in at least two Minsk working groups dealing with humanitarian and political issues, and they are doing everything possible to ensure a peaceful solution to the situation in the Donbas.

But the war has also meant greater involvement by women in the armed forces. Many Ukrainian women voluntarily signed enlistment contracts in order to protect their country against the aggression. We now have 19,892 women in the armed forces of Ukraine, of whom 2,458 are officers and 17,000 are non-commissioned officers or soldiers. Of that group, 266 women were mobilized directly into the ranks of the armed forces. Women also play an important role in providing medical help at the front, and very often they have been active in saving both civilians and our soldiers during the conflict. This year we took a number of special steps to include the gender component in the area of security-sector reform. Although those measures are just at their initial stage — to speak frankly — they have already brought initial results: they have brought about a transformation in the military structures and the military culture.

This past summer we expanded the list of specialities in which women can serve in the armed forces, including in military functions. We need to bring gender advisers into the military. We hope that will be done soon and that the Ukrainian Government will adopt such a measure. We plan to enact broader legal changes so as to eliminate barriers, ensure the equal representation of women in the military and enhance parliamentary oversight of national security and defence.

In order to respond appropriately to violence against women, one of the upcoming steps to be taken by the Parliament is to ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence

against Women and Domestic Violence. I believe that the Parliament in Ukraine will ratify the Istanbul Convention during the current session. The relevant bills have already been introduced in the Parliament, and I hope that Parliament will ratify them this autumn.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Ukraine wants to further promote the rights of women and ensure their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as to protect women against all forms of violence.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Russian Federation for organizing today's open debate on the topic "Women and peace and security: implementing the common agenda". I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka for their briefings. I also listened carefully to the briefings delivered by the representatives of civil society.

Thanks to the common efforts of Member States, United Nations organs and regional organizations, the implementation of Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security has recently made progress. The international community has undertaken comprehensive efforts to protect women's security, safeguard their rights and interests and push for a greater role for women on peace and security. Those efforts have resulted in progress. At the same time, the international security situation remains complex and grave, with the frequent occurrence of regional conflicts. In some countries and regions, the threats of terrorism and violent extremism are on the rise. And women, being a vulnerable group in that regard, bear the brunt of such violence. The international community should closely coordinate and cooperate in providing assistance and comprehensively enhancing the all-round protection of women in conflict situations. I wish to emphasize the following points.

First, the political settlement of regional hot-spot issues needs to be promoted so as to create a favourable external environment for the protection of women's rights and interests. The international community should advocate the concepts of win-win cooperation and peaceful development, assist the countries concerned, advance political settlements and national reconciliation and promote dialogue and consultations as ways of resolving differences and of ensuring that women are spared the impact of conflicts and are able to enjoy a peace dividend. The full participation of women in decision-making needs to be ensured at all stages of peace processes so that they can leverage their unique advantages and act as a positive force in peacemaking.

Secondly, comprehensive economic and social development needs to be promoted in order to provide a sound basis for women's empowerment. The international community should help the countries concerned in carrying out post-conflict reconstruction by supporting them in enhancing capacity-building so as to promote economic and social development and better protect women's rights and interests. The international community should actively provide development assistance and technical support to developing countries to help them promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and at the same time guide women's groups and civil society so that they can play a positive and constructive role in that respect.

Thirdly, cooperation among the various organs of the United Nations should be promoted to generate synergies aimed at protecting women in conflict situations. The Security Council should fully shoulder its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, accord priority to issues related to women and peace and security and strengthen coordination with the relevant organs, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and UN-Women. As part of that process, the various organs of the United Nations should fully utilize existing mechanisms and improve their efficiency, and, at the same time, place strong emphasis on the role of regional and subregional organizations in protecting women in conflicts.

Fourthly, attention must be given to combating sexual violence in conflicts in order to effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of women. The international community should pay close attention to the heinous acts of terrorists and extremists violating women and aggressively combat such actions. The international community should also pay attention to the leading role of the countries concerned and help them to comprehensively implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and enhance their ability to combat sexual violence. The international community should respond appropriately to terrorist threats, advance international counter-terrorism cooperation and take comprehensive measures to protect women from terrorist and extremist forces.

In September last year, China and the United Nations jointly sponsored the Global Summit on Women. Chinese President Xi Jinping and representatives from more than 140 countries, including approximately 80 Heads of State or Government, attended the Summit. The Summit forged an international consensus, with world leaders recommitting themselves to implementing the outcome of the Beijing World Conference on Women. That will have a major and profound impact on the global women's cause. President Xi Jinping announced at the Summit China's new commitments in support of the development of the global women's cause, including contributing to UN-Women and providing assistance to developing countries. Those commitments demonstrate China's firm resolve and practical action in its commitment to the healthy development of the global women's cause. China is making comprehensive efforts to implement those commitments.

In May, the 2016 Chinese presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20) held the Women 20 Meeting in Xi'an, under the theme "Equal participation and innovative development", in an effort to push for equal participation of women in economic development and global governance, as well as for improvement in women's economic empowerment. China is willing to work together with the rest of the international community to continue to push for the implementation of the goals regarding women and peace and security and to make tireless efforts towards further progress in the global women's cause.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking today's briefers, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka and Ms. Rita Lopidia, for their valuable insights on this important topic.

Allow me to begin with a quotation from Ms. Alaa Murabit, a Libyan female activist:

"I am an arms dealer in Libya, but my weapons reduce violence and last longer than a bullet."

Needless to say, the arms that Ms. Murabit promotes are not real weapons, but rather take the form of women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. I believe her words well illustrate why the Security Council has held annual debates on the issue of women and peace and security for more than 15 years. The issue of women's participation has real and tangible effects on the promotion of international peace and security.

We continue to witness a large number of conflicts around the world. According to the World Bank, 90 per cent of conflicts from 2000 to 2009 were relapses. It is against such a backdrop that securing women's participation in peace processes is vital for the success and sustainability of those processes. For example, in 2014 a peace agreement was reached in Mindanao, the Philippines, after 17 years of conflict, and another was recently reached in Colombia after half a century of civil war. It is noteworthy that in both of those recent cases one third of the negotiators at the table were women. Just like the case of Ms. Murabit in Libya, those examples illustrate that many female activists are seeking to bring peace to their countries — and they are succeeding.

The year 2015 was a landmark year for the women and peace and security agenda. The Security Council adopted resolution 2242 (2015), which was the eighth resolution on this agenda and which represents a steady accumulation of norms on the issue. We welcome the steady implementation of the resolution. Close to 70 countries have already announced their national commitments to implement it. We also welcome the establishment of the Informal Expert Group in accordance with the resolution. We appreciate the efforts that go beyond the resolution, such as the establishment of national focal points in approximately 50 countries to exchange best practices on the issue. Furthermore, the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting that Japan co-hosted in London last month provided further momentum to women's participation in peacekeeping operations.

Those developments show that norms and commitments are already on the table. I believe that Council members should now implement their commitments to advance the agenda. Japan has been steadfast in implementing its own commitments announced last October. To that end, Japan began monitoring the implementation of its national action plan this year. Moreover, we have expressed readiness to support other countries in creating their own action plans.

First, Japan and UN-Women co-hosted an Asia-Pacific regional symposium in Bangkok in July, with the aim of sharing our experiences in the draftin and implementation of our national action plans. Similarly, Japan supported the UN-Women project for League of Arab State countries. By funding projects of UN-Women and the Office of the Special Representative of

the Secretary-General, led by Ms. Bangura, Japan aims to protect and empower displaced and migrant women in the Middle East and Africa. That issue requires immediate and constant attention from the Security Council in the world of today, as eloquently illustrated by our briefers.

Before concluding, I would like to state that Japan will once again host the World Assembly for Women — WAW! for short — in Tokyo in December, for the third consecutive year. Women and peace and security will be one of the main topics of discussion, and I look forward to sharing the outcomes with the Council.

Security Council members must stand united in promoting the agenda. Such a demonstration of unity would carry greater political weight and convey a stronger message to the world. During its tenure as a member of the Council, Japan will continue to work with other Council members and with the United Nations as a whole to promote the important agenda.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate on women and peace and security. We commend the briefings by the Secretary-General and by the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, whom we commend on her excellent work leading that body, as well as the excellent testimony given by Ms. Rita Lopidia.

The various forms of violence, discrimination and gender inequality against women and girls are the product of a number of factors having political and economic roots that aggravate inequality. This is a priority matter for the world today, in particular when, because of armed conflicts of varying scales, women are considerably and disproportionately impacted by war more than ever.

The report presented this year (S/2016/822) illustrates the fact that there has been some progress in specific aspects of the agenda on women and peace and security. An example is the increase in the number of peace agreements that have specific provisions relating to gender. We have also seen an increase in the participation and presence of women in the mediation processes that have been co-led by the United Nations. There has also been significant progress with regard to women and peace and security over the past 15 years in legislative terms. However, there are still major challenges. Women in conflict situations continue to suffer in a disproportionate and brutal manner from the consequences of armed conflicts. They continue to be subjected to systematic violence and sexual abuse.

Venezuela urges the international community to continue working on dealing with exclusion, inequality and the various forms of sexual violence against women and girls during armed conflicts. Such inexcusable instances of violence only reflect and exacerbate the disequilibrium and imbalance that women and girls are already subject to in periods before armed conflicts. During armed conflicts, those problems generate specific vulnerabilities that require urgent action and the highest possible political commitment.

We believe that it is a priority to address the underlying causes that lead to the feminization of poverty and the lack of opportunities regarding access to health care, jobs, and political and economic participation. We must therefore prevent exclusionary paradigms and stereotypes that ignore the cultural and ethical diversity and richness of our world. Women cannot continue be the object of manipulation; they must not be treated as objects used to advance commercial, military or political goals. We are convinced that the participation and contribution of women at all levels and stages and in areas related to conflict resolution are vital to preventing such conflicts and to achieving lasting peace. There can be no international peace and security if the half of the population that is represented by women and girls is not included and taken into consideration.

The bolstering of efforts aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of resolutions dealing with women and peace and security demands effective coordination on the part of the States concerned, the various relevant offices of the United Nations under their respective mandates, and the various regional and subregional mechanisms that deal with the issue. In advancing those efforts and initiatives we should take into account the participation of women in each of the national contexts and conflicts. We should consider the prevailing political models and the social, cultural and religious models of each society in order to find the most appropriate way to address the issue. We ought to consider specific contexts and build models that can be fine-tuned to each of those contexts.

It has been shown that, with respect to peace and security, the percentage of aid given to promoting gender

equality and equity is very low. It is much less than what we need in order to meet our commitments in that area. A fundamental aspect of meeting those commitments is the provision of sufficient resources to create resilience in zones of conflict and post-conflict — in particular, training and increasing the national institutional capacities regarding gender, justice, health and social welfare, and the empowerment and training needed for the preparation and implementation of national action plans on women and peace and security.

One of the other challenges facing the international community today is the high level of violence and sexual abuse used as tools of war by terrorist groups in the Middle East and Africa, particularly the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Jaysh al-Islam, Al-Qaida, the Al-Nusra Front, Boko Haram and all other associated armed groups. Thousands of women and girls have been victims of atrocities and crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, particularly those who fall into ethnic and religious minorities. Boko Haram has perpetrated more than 2,000 kidnappings of children, 276 of whom continue to be missing.

It is unacceptable that women and girls throughout the world continue to be considered the loot of war. It infringes upon their human condition and is shameful. There is also the situation of women and girls in the Palestinian occupied territories, where they are victims of disproportionate and constant violence, assassinations and detentions. Other conflicts, such as those in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, have made women and girls the targets of hate, violence and armed attacks, all of which represent flagrant violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We cannot accept impunity in the face of such crimes. Venezuela advocates assigning accountability for all forms of sexual violence, and there should be exemplary sentences handed down to those found responsible for such crimes.

In that regard, we repeat our appeal regarding the texts and resolutions of the Council relating to the prohibition against the provision of arms or financial and logistic support to such groups, so that we can neutralize their operational capacities and the horrendous practices of sexual exploitation and violence. We reiterate our appeal to the international community to strategically coordinate efforts to prevent sexual violence. There must be a common front linking all possible efforts to prevent extremist violence and terrorism.

We must also reiterate our categorical condemnation of all incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by foreign armed forces, police or civilians deployed by the Organization in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. That includes those staff who have not been formally deployed on such missions. In accordance with the provisions of resolution 2272 (2016), we support the zero-tolerance policy regarding any sexual violence that is committed by members of peacekeeping operations or military missions under the mandate of and supported by the Security Council. The United Nations should serve as an example of coherence regarding the importance of preventing such acts, particularly regarding the accountability of all personnel of the Organization and international armed forces who have been authorized by this body and who commit such crimes.

We reassert our firm belief that women can be major players in ensuring the emancipation of our people. In our country women play a vital role in constructing society. In the process of our Bolivarian revolution, they have taken very important steps in the legal and constitutional context aimed at achieving gender equality at all levels regarding the functionality of our State's society. At the global level, women should be working in and benefitting from equal conditions and opportunities in the development of peace and they should be included in an equal way. They have wrought change. In the aforementioned historical process, we reiterate our country's commitment to continue to work with determination in following the noble goal of paying the historical debt of humankind back to women.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I wish first to thank the presidency for convening this timely meeting, which comes roughly one year after the completion of the review of resolution 1325 (2000). I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon; the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; and Ms. Rita Lopidia of South Sudan, representing civil society, for their respective briefings. My delegation greatly appreciates their tireless commitment to women's rights and empowerment in the pursuit of peace and security, and we pay tribute to their continued efforts in that regard.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and I wish to add the following remarks to further contribute to the discussion.

The high-level review and its accompanying global study of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) successfully renewed international momentum towards fully actualizing the involvement of women and leveraged their influence on matters of peace and security. Similarly, the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015) provided additional impetus for the Security Council to explore issues of women and peace and security more deeply, including in country-specific contexts through the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend Spain and the United Kingdom for their able leadership of the Informal Expert Group, which has enriched broader Council discussions. We commend the steps taken by Member States to adopt or review national action plans on women and peace and security and encourage their continued implementation. The establishment of a women and peace and security national focal point network is another useful platform for sharing information and experiences among Member States, including on national action plans.

While there has been some progress, we stress that much more can and must be done to fully utilize the women and peace and security agenda to resolve and prevent armed conflict. In our assessment, three key areas require more focus and attention, namely, peace processes, peacekeeping and policymaking.

We fully support efforts to increase and prioritize the participation of women at all levels in peace processes and mediation efforts. The peace process in Colombia showed us how the significant involvement of women, both at the main peace talks in Havana and in regional and national consultations, was critical in supporting the successful conclusion of the initial peace agreement between the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo. Increased access to gender expertise by international mediators and negotiating parties in the drafting of peace agreements, resulting in the inclusion of gender-specific provisions in a greater number of agreements, is another positive development that should be sustained.

We also share the assessment that the presence of women peacekeepers in conflict zones can facilitate interaction and confidence-building with local communities and affected populations, particularly women and children. In addition to endorsing the three P's — planning, pledges and performance — the London communiqué adopted by the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting held last month also affirmed the commitment to increase women's participation in uniformed roles. In that regard, I am pleased to share that, as of 16 September, Malaysia has increased from 26 to 40 the number of women military personnel deployed within our contingent under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Additionally, in implementing pledges on capacity-building made during the 2015 peacekeeping summit, the Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre conducted three training courses in the first half of this year on the issues of gender, cultural diversity and the protection of civilians, the latter with the cooperation of the Government of Japan. The courses benefitted more than 40 military and civilian personnel. We hope to maintain and expand such training in the coming years.

Resolution 1325 (2000) recognized the need for gender perspective to be taken into account in political, security and humanitarian action. While there has been some progress in mainstreaming gender considerations in the work of the United Nations, notably the recent adoption of the Peacebuilding Commission's gender strategy, there is still a long way to go in fully implementing such policies. In that regard, Malaysia believes that increasing the number of women in decision-making positions contributes to the development and implementation of holistic and gender-inclusive policies that benefit the community, the State and the Organization as a whole.

The call made in resolution 1325 (2000) for increased representation of women at all decision-making levels remains as acute and relevant now as it was then, including within the United Nations. We continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve gender parity within the United Nations, especially at senior decision-making levels.

In conclusion, the women and peace and security agenda aspires to restore the role of women and girls — one half of humankind — as effective actors with an equal stake in peace and security efforts. Our task will be complete only when women's representation and participation in conflict prevention, management and

resolution is axiomatic. Until then, my delegation offers its steadfast commitment and support to furthering the Secretary-General's agenda. We hope that Secretary-General-designate Guterres will continue to build on the women and peace and security initiative begun under Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Under-Secretary-General Mlambo-Ngcuka and Ms. Lopidia for their briefings and reality checks from the real world. I have two impressions from this debate so far.

First, the energy in the Chamber is palpable — it is not an energy we often feel here — and it is very fair to say that this agenda would not be before the Security Council if not for the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and women's groups. This is something I think that States Members of the United Nations need to bear in mind, especially those that are increasingly trying to keep NGOs, civil society groups and others from participating in United Nations meetings.

Secondly, after listening to Council speakers, I am struck that we are all drawing from the same handful of examples. It is sad that we have only a limited roster of very inspiring examples to draw from. I think another true measure of our progress would be if each of us spoke without repeating the same examples of Liberia, Yemen et cetera. You will hear me draw upon the very same examples that my colleagues have drawn upon; we have got to do better. It is incredible that women are fighting out in the world in the way that they are and giving us these great sources of inspiration and learning, but it should not be so exceptional and there should not be so few.

Do not get me wrong: of course there has been genuine progress since resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted, 16 long years ago, and some of that progress is apparent on paper. In 2015, 70 per cent of peace agreements signed had gender-specific provisions, as compared to just 22 per cent of agreements in 2010. That is a big leap in a short period. Over the past year alone, 11 new countries completed national action plans explaining how they are going to empower women to resolve conflict and promote development. As we have heard, that brings the total number to 64 countries. Some progress has been made in representation, if not on the Security Council, as there was at least one woman present in the delegations for 9 of 11 active negotiation processes in 2015, as compared to 4 of 14 in 2011. That is not nothing.

The United States continues to support that progress. President Obama released our second national action plan in June and, in addition to contributing $31 million to new initiatives launched over the past year, we are also looking through our plan at how to address new challenges. That includes how women can more effectively contribute to strategies on countering violent extremism.

Unfortunately, what the statistics miss is the persistent gap between how men and women actually contribute to peace processes. Even if women are present at the table, which is still too rare, men are the ones who almost always decide when and how to make peace. Therefore, today I would like to talk briefly about why we need to do more to promote not mere participation but meaningful and effective participation, with a stress on the word "effective".

Let me start by describing the benefits of women's participation. As we have heard — and, again, these are the same studies all of us cite — peace processes are more likely to succeed when women are involved. One study of 40 peace processes since 1989 found that, the more women influenced a negotiation, the higher the likelihood that an agreement would be reached. Another study found that the likelihood of a peace agreement lasting more than two years increased by 20 per cent when women were involved. Why is that? In part, it is because women often demand results. When negotiations stall, as they inevitably do, women's groups can help push for talks to resume and press the parties to reach consensus. Women tend to demand more than what is politically expedient or in their narrow self-interest. Again, this is on the basis of limited data, because of the limited participation, but women's groups are known for lobbying for causes that do go beyond gender, including for human rights, transitional justice and reconciliation to be addressed in peace agreements. Those are causes that are all too often deferred or ignored when women are not there.

Here I will turn to the example of the Philippines. In negotiations between the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a group seeking greater autonomy for the country's south, women were active at every level, from working groups to serving as lead negotiators. After negotiators reached an impasse in 2010, the women participants called for a national

dialogue that generated new ideas to get the parties talking again. When violence broke out after the signing of the 2012 framework agreement, women helped organize protests calling for the parties to get back to the table.

Or let us consider the Colombia peace process, where up to one-third of the participants at the table were women. Those female representatives lobbied relentlessly so that those who committed sexual violence in the conflict would not be eligible for pardons. And they advocated for economic support to help women access new development opportunities in rural areas.

But these examples are still the exceptions. In Syria, South Sudan and Yemen, men are the ones making decisions, even as we sit here in negotiations. Maybe it is time to heed the famous aphorism that the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. Too often, what gets labelled as women's participation is just checking a box — a perfunctory meeting of male negotiators with female members of civil society. This matters not just for the content of a peace agreement itself: when children see peace accords signed by groups of men, the message received is that the men are the ones who matter in affairs of State and who are empowered to end conflicts. We do not want young girls internalizing that message. We members of the Security Council need to demand that women have the ability to influence the course of negotiations, not just because women deserve it — which of course they do — but because when women are effective and meaningful participants, we have a better chance at achieving the mission of the Security Council, which is preserving peace and security.

That brings me to my second and final point. In places where sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, the Council needs to address more fundamental needs — the protection of women and accountability for those who commit abuses. Let us consider South Sudan, which has already been mentioned. In South Sudan's Unity state, Government soldiers killed and raped civilians, pillaged homes and destroyed livestock, forcing families to flee into swamps to hide. Anyone who left the swamps risked sexual assault, so when women had to start venturing out to find food, these communities reportedly nominated the oldest women to go first to protect the children and teenagers from being raped. When the first ones grew too weak or had been raped too many times, these communities moved to the next oldest woman. Let us just imagine for a moment what the impact of these choices must be on the women of Unity state in South Sudan — imagine that was our own mother or grandmother going out to shield our daughter.

Extremist groups are using medieval tactics elsewhere to subjugate women. We see this with Boko Haram, when the organization kidnapped schoolgirls to be forcibly married to fighters or brainwashed to be suicide bombers. We see this with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, when Yazidi women and girls are sold as sex slaves in markets. So building peace in those conflicts must start by stopping the attacks against women and making sure that women will not be attacked with impunity. That means ending impunity generally, which we are not doing a good job of.

Those women, however, are not just victims of violence. Their experiences need to be part of the long process of healing and rebuilding from a conflict. Recognizing their dignity means not just inviting them to negotiations but making sure that they are not relegated to waiting in a side room for the men to break from the real negotiations and to deign to come in and receive their petition or hear their views. That may sound simple, but frequently Member States treat violence against women as a tragic by-product of conflict, left to resolve itself once the men stop fighting.

Protecting women from attacks and holding accountable those who commit these abuses need to be essential components of brokering peace, whether in our resolutions, in mediation processes or in peace operations. We have seen and we live every day how challenging this is. One place for members of the Security Council to start is to make certain that all components of the United Nations system do their utmost to keep women in conflicts safe. That is why the United States will continue to demand that peacekeeping missions carry out their mandates to protect civilians and why the Secretary-General must ensure, as he recommitted to again today and as stipulated in resolution 2272 (2016), that when there is credible evidence of widespread or systematic sexual exploitation and abuse by a peacekeeping unit, that unit is swiftly repatriated. Zero tolerance must come to mean zero tolerance.

Let me conclude with Liberia. Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee organized women who were fed up with the violence of Liberia's civil war. When the negotiators went to Ghana, Leymah and her growing

movement went too, surrounding the negotiators in their hall to make sure that they did not come out until peace was reached. As she told a reporter at the time, the protest was

> "a signal to the world that we the Liberian women in Ghana at this conference are fed up with the war and tired of fighting the killing of our people".

Leymah added, "We can do it again if we want to".

Let us imagine where we would be if every conflict had groups of women like this. Now let us imagine our world if people like Leymah were not just calling for peace from outside conference centres, but if she and others like her were sitting at the table on the inside. Before a conflict, during a conflict and after a conflict, women must have an effective, meaningful and impactful voice. We on the Council must not rest until paper progress becomes tangible progress and check-the-box participation becomes meaningful participation.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like first to thank the Russian presidency for having organized this annual debate on the topic of women and peace and security, which the Security Council and the international community continue to attach major importance, in accordance with its primary mission of conflict prevention and resolution.

The critical and multidimensional nature of this issue were both clearly evident in the briefings we have heard this morning. I warmly thank the briefers, His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women; and Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of the EVE Organization for Women Development.

The Senegalese delegation also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, to which Senegal belongs.

Insecurity in all its forms — social, political, economic and environmental — is an impediment to gender equality and to the empowerment of women. Whenever and wherever there is insecurity, women and girls are those primarily affected. However, as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "women, who know the price of conflict so well, are also often better equipped than men to prevent or resolve it".

But the specific life experiences of women in conflict, as well as their skills, are not sufficiently taken into account in reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding processes, precisely because women and girls are often kept away from decision-making bodies. Last year, therefore, when we reviewed the 15 years since the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council recognized the urgent need to effectively implement all its provisions at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

As is known, Senegal was among the earliest African countries to enact legal standards for absolute parity between men and women for all its elected and semi-elected posts. At the same time, we have pushed for the adoption by the African Union of the same full gender parity within the governing bodies of the African Union Commission. Senegal is also the first African country to have successfully tested the powerful mechanism of the "situation room", the crisis-management tool through which women deploy all their energy, all their commitment and their entire sense of responsibility in order to ensure that election processes are as free, transparent and peaceful as possible. Senegal has also taken the innovative approach of translating resolution 1325 (2000) into the main popular languages of Senegal in order to facilitate ownership of its contents by the population and to promote capacity-building for women, for therein lies the success of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

On another level, in Senegal, a sectoral strategy implemented by the Ministries of Defence and Security has led to the institutionalization of the gender approach in actions taken by the Senegalese defence and security forces. Senegal has also adopted the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual or gender-based violence, particularly in peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, Senegalese civil society organizations are very active when it comes to advocating for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), primarily by providing support for capacity-building for women and girls.

Senegal has expressed its national commitment in favour of resolution 1325 (2000) at the West African subregional level, at the African continental level and at the international level. With respect to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Senegal has participated actively in the planning, organization and monitoring of periodic regional conferences where experiences with the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are shared. At the first such conference, organized in September 2010 in Dakar, the ECOWAS

Regional Action Plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted.

It was pursuant to this regional action plan that Senegal drew up its own national action plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000), which revolves around three pillars. The first pillar is prevention, which involves setting up monitoring structures to better detect and fight against all forms of violence against women. The second pillar is participation, favouring the involvement of women in the conflict-prevention, management and resolution mechanisms and in traditional governance bodies. The third pillar is assistance and restructuring, which are primarily aimed at protecting the physical and mental health of women, their economic empowerment, specific support for women from vulnerable groups, and the launching of programmes and structures that take into account the specific needs of women in conflict and post-conflict phases.

It is in this spirit that many efforts are currently being made in Africa, where the commitment of regional organizations clearly shows that peace is inextricably linked with gender equality. In this respect, we welcome regular holding of consultative meetings among the member States of the African Union to assess regional mechanisms for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The most recent of these meetings was held in Addis Ababa in December 2015 at the initiative of Mrs. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, who is also the person who conceived, hosted and popularized the situation room I referred to earlier. We welcome her leadership and tireless efforts to guarantee the safety of women and children in countries affected by conflict in Africa.

Senegal also actively participates in other regional initiatives such as the intergenerational dialogues on peace and security involving women and girls. It is along the same lines that my country joined the wonderful Spanish initiative that my colleague Román Oyarzun Marchesi has so eloquently spoken about, namely, the establishment of the national focal point network for women, peace and security. The first meeting of that network took place on 23 September, with the participation of Senegal.

Despite these commendable efforts, much remains to be done because it is very clear that women and girls continue to suffer disproportionately in conflict zones and during conflict periods around the world. That is why, in the context of emerging challenges in terms of peace and security, it is urgent to invest further in national early-warning and rapid-response mechanisms in order to ensure the full participation women and civil-society organizations in peace processes. Similarly, we have to think about strengthening dialogue between women and national and regional authorities on women's rights and the involvement of women in peace and security processes. Accordingly, we must further encourage the holding of regional events on conflict before, during and after elections. It is also crucial to promote education focused on peace in order to create a true culture of peace in all States, while further sensitizing defence and security forces, legal practitioners and religious and traditional leaders on all the implications of resolution 1325 (2000).

In conclusion, I would like to point out that improving women's access to justice, the fight against impunity and the effective empowerment of women remain priority objectives in terms of the full implementation of international, regional and national instruments to promote and protect women's rights, as resolution 1325 (2000) calls on us to do.

Last year, at the global leaders' summit meeting presided over by the Chinese President here in New York, at which Senegalese President Macky Sall participated, strong and encouraging commitments were made in favour of the full participation and better representation of women at all levels. The effort to fulfil these commitments will be the price we have to pay to achieve peaceful and inclusive societies by 2030.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement and the Russian presidency for organizing today's debate on a subject that, since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 16 years ago, has been a priority of the highest order for France in the Security Council. I also thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for her statement and her commitment, and Ms. Rita Lopidia, for her statement and for her outstanding work as the head of EVE Organization for Women Development, South Sudan.

The promotion of women at the United Nations is not a marketing ploy or a public-relations operation. It is a fundamental issue in itself, and it is — let us make no mistake about this — a condition of the success and effectiveness of the United Nations. This is particularly true for the women and peace and security agenda,

where we must fulfil our commitments and indeed make them operational.

Since the adoption of foundational resolution 1325 (2000), seven other resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council in the context of the women and peace and security agenda. This topic has emerged as a major element in the Council's work, in United Nations agencies and in peacekeeping operations. We have worked collectively to take greater account of the situation of women in conflict both to meet the specific threats to them and protect them and to ensure their full participation in peacebuilding.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 2242 (2015) one year ago marked the rebuilding of that agenda and the renewal of our joint commitment. The reform that began in 2015 is, above all, a political reform. Resolution 2242 (2015) highlights the need for States to ensure that women participate more actively in political processes, peace negotiations and conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. States are responsible for ensuring that women's organizations are included in discussions on international peace and security, not only to hear their opinions but also and in particular to allow them to make a contribution to the discussions. It is also up to States to appoint more women to decision-making posts, in particular, within the competent conflict prevention and resolution structures. That same responsibility lies with the United Nations, as it appoints a greater number of women to posts as Special Envoys or High-level Experts to the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. This is encouraging but the practice must become more widespread. During the first few years of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, some perhaps viewed those appointments as symbolic but they should be seen as effective actions that were taken to promote international peace and security.

That leads me to the second aspect of the reform that began 2015, relating to operations. The increased participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is vital and relates both to the number of women who participate in peacekeeping operations and the level of their participation in all activities pertaining to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Operational planning and the development of mandates must take those challenges into account at all stages of the crisis — at the start of conflicts to prevent risks, in particular by including women in decision-making processes and conflict prevention policies; and during conflicts to protect women from violence, in particular sexual violence and post-conflict, and to assist victims in rebuilding their lives and by enabling them to fully participate in rebuilding their country.

That would require close cooperation between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Department of Field Support and the Department of Political Affairs, on the one hand, and UN-Women, on the other. Much has already been done to take into account the dimension of gender equality in peacekeeping operations. The mandates of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic have included the relevant elements of resolutions on women and peace and security. We must now go even further and streamline that approach in all peacekeeping operations mandates. France will continue to work towards that goal. Finally, the implementation of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security allows for the improved follow-up of such goals and a more systematic approach to equality between men and women, with regard to issues related to international peace and security. France will play an active part and continue to play its full role.

France has also set ambitious goals. At the national level, on 4 March 2015, we adopted a second national action plan for the period 2015-2018. That plan will be subject to a mid-term review by civil society over the next few weeks. In that regard, the French Government is determined to pursue those efforts on the basis on commitments made in 2015 within the framework of the high-level review. The French Government will concern to act with a view to gaining greater visibility for our national action plan and to enable a greater number of women to gain access to high ranking positions related to peace and stability, in particular, to cite just one example, with the goal of having 40 per cent of women at the helm of our diplomatic network by 2018.

At the regional and international levels, we continue to actively promote the women and peace and security agenda. Within the European Union, we implore other member States to systematically include in their common defence policies the protection of women in situations of conflict and the promotion of their role in crisis emergence. I have said that, at the United Nations, we work with a better understanding of

the agenda within peacekeeping operations mandates. Within the Group of Seven, we encourage an ambitious implementation of the women and peace and security agenda with our country partners. Finally, no later than tomorrow, we are organizing in Paris a high-level conference on peacekeeping operations in French-speaking environments, which recalls the importance of that agenda.

At the same time, we remain committed on the ground, with more than 900 persons deployed in six peacekeeping operations, who receive training that includes human rights and gender equality within the context of peacekeeping operations. Above and beyond the strict framework of international peace and security, France remains fully committed to the United Nations on the vital issue of violence against women and, in that regard, along with the Netherlands, we will present the biannual General Assembly draft resolution on violence against women.

The holding of today's public debate and its success illustrates our common interest in promoting an agenda that is crucial to all of our work on peace and security. More than ever before, France would like to play a leading role in this area through its national public policies in the Security Council and in all international forums in which our country participates. The promotion of women at the United Nations is a daily struggle for us all.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Russian presidency for having convened today's open debate and for the concept paper (S/2016/871, annex); Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the briefing on his annual report on women and peace and security (S/2016/822); the Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her briefing; and the representative of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and South Sudan civil society representative, Rita Lopidia, for her valiant plea.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement of the Group of Friends of women and peace and security to be delivered by the representative of Canada.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was a question mark with regard to the women and peace and security agenda by acknowledging the disproportionate impact of war and armed conflict on women, boys and girls. Today, 16 years after its adoption, the growing incidence of terrorism, the nature and proliferation of conflicts, as well as the persistent non-compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law by the parties in armed conflicts merely serves to intensify the above-mentioned impact by increasing the suffering of millions of innocent people. Resolution 1820 (2008) was the first to recognize sexual violence as a tactic of war.

In spite of the efforts made at the national and international levels, women and girls continue to be subjected to deliberate attacks and are victims of rape, gender-based violence, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, genital mutilation, human trafficking, forced marriages and pregnancies and sexual exploitation and abuse. The victims of sexual violence in conflict situations endure irreversible physical and psychological trauma and, on many occasions, suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. That situation is of particular concern in the case of forced pregnancy, given the impact of such diseases on the health of mother and child and the stigmatization and social exclusion they face and of which they are the primary victims.

Attacks on hospitals and humanitarian personnel are not the only form of violations of international law but they prevent the victims of sexual violence, as well as newborns and pregnant women, from having access to health services and sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion services as well as the medication needed to ensure their survival. I urge parties to armed conflict to comply with their international obligations, in particular with the provisions of resolution 2286 (2016), whose implementation is crucial to alleviating the suffering of the weakest.

Likewise, we must deploy additional efforts to ensure the sexual and reproductive rights of women in conflict situations, as well as provide comprehensive, non-discriminatory health-care services and psychological support to victims. Similarly, we deem it crucial to step up the efforts of the United Nations as a whole and of Member States to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women in refugee camps, which currently poses a major challenge.

Uruguay would like to stress the link between sexual violence and the maintenance and financing of terrorist organizations, since the latter use women and girls as prizes or incentives to recruit men and boys and thereby force them into prostitution. Given

this cruel reality, we deem it crucial to reaffirm the collective political will and commitment to fight sexual violence, mobilize additional financial resources so as to create programmes that are capable of responding to the needs of victims, and ensure effective research and data-gathering procedures as well as access to justice at the national and international levels, including the International Criminal Court.

Similarly, we call for progress in the implementation of the commitments undertaken at the international level to eliminate all forms of human trafficking and discrimination due to race, colour, gender, language, religion, political views or any other characteristic or social condition.

We are deeply concerned by the impact of armed conflict on the education and in particular the literacy of girls, whose schooling is disproportionately impacted. We are also deeply dismayed at the impact of forced child marriage on the education of girls, who are excluded from formal education and in many cases forced to do domestic work. According to the report of the Secretary-General, in conflict situations girls are 90 per cent more likely not to receive secondary education than in countries that are not so affected. Appropriate access to educational and political systems and the economic empowerment of women must be guaranteed in order to be able to make progress with respect to these goals.

Women must be part of the solutions to these global challenges. Their inclusion in peacekeeping and peacebuilding as well as in decision-making processes is not only fair but also necessary, and it is crucial to take measures and actions that are sustainable over time and properly reflect the challenges on the ground. Experience has shown that women are relevant players in the prevention and resolution of conflict. They play an important role in the peacebuilding process, the rebuilding of societies and the promotion of new approaches with a gender perspective. In this framework, we believe that it is necessary to provide opportunities that enhance the potential of women in these areas and ensure their planned and equitable access to decision-making posts.

The participation of women in the military and police components of peacekeeping operations has a positive effect on the population, since it reduces the undue use of force and makes it possible to become closer to the local population, in particular when there have been cases of the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls.

Despite all of the foregoing, very often we face serious difficulties in enhancing the participation and action of women in areas related to peace and security. The number of women who participate in peace negotiations is very low, as it is in terms of the personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations, both military and police. According to the report of the Secretary-General, in December 2015 women made up only 4.7 per cent of all deployed military experts, 3.2 per cent of military troops and 16.9 per cent of police officers.

In this context, Uruguay reaffirms its commitment through strengthening measures such as maintaining an above-average percentage of women deployed in peace operations; continuing with the mandatory training of military troops that are to be deployed on issues of the prevention of and response to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse; and continuing with the zero-tolerance policy in cases of misconduct, sexual violence are any other violation of the code of conduct. Likewise, we reiterate our commitment to the zero-tolerance policy established by the Secretary-General and our readiness to continue to ensure that those who carry out acts of sexual exploitation and abuse are held accountable.

We are aware of the fact that the problems associated with women and girls due to armed conflict are very extensive and complex and require multifaceted efforts to be able to address them in a coherent and comprehensive manner. In this respect, we welcome the efforts of civil society and acknowledge in particular the synergies that are possible in the context of the various global tools available in this respect such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Sustainable Development Goals, the value of exchanging experiences through the national focal point network established by Spain, and the work of the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security.

Also crucial is the quality and quantity of the information that reaches the Security Council, and, in this respect, we commend the work done by the Secretary-General in including specific information in his country situation reports urging fine-tuning of the relevant mechanisms. The efforts made to ensure the greater participation of women in peacekeeping and

peacebuilding, as well as to adopt measures that reduce the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, have not had the desired results or allowed us to respond effectively to the challenges on the ground. That is why we deem it crucial to go beyond any approach that leads us to exclude a segment of the population that is particularly vulnerable to the effects of conflict from the solutions and measures that are to be adopted. Women are key actors precisely because they are direct victims and because they make up approximately 50 per cent of the civilian population affected.

In this respect, Uruguay is considering the holding of an Arria Formula meeting in December to address the possible synergy between the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the women and peace and security agenda.

We call upon the Secretary-General-designate, the United Nations as a whole and all Member States to continue to give pride of place to the women and peace and security agenda and all that it entails.

It is frustrating that in the twenty-first century, after so many discussions at the international level, this reality has remained unchanged. We must act with a focus on the challenges we are facing, which require the more equitable participation of women at all levels in peace and security discussions. We cannot disregard this reality. We must undertake commitments and devise solutions that are based on inclusion, not exclusion. Millions of people are waiting for us to act.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his opening remarks and to UN-Women Executive Director Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for presenting the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/822), and we welcome Ms. Rita Lopidia of South Sudan, who spoke on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. We were deeply touched by the message she conveyed to the Council on the dire situation of women in South Sudan.

Since the holding more than a year ago of the open debate celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and the high-level review, this is an occasion to assess the progress achieved so far. The global study on the resolution's implementation highlighted the critical contribution of women to peace and security. We join the Executive Director of UN-Women in her call on Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations to do more to take forward the study's recommendations and turn commitments into concrete action.

We further share the Secretary-General's view on the need to strengthen women's particiaption and leadership in peace and security endeavours and on United Nations progress towards achieving a gender balance in its staff at all levels by emphasizing the essential link between women's involvement in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these processes. The Permanent Representative of the United States was particularly eloquent in illustrating that reality.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) provides key information on progress made following the high-level review, highlighting some headway made in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). More women are involved in peace talks, more peace agreements include provisions related to the special needs of women and girls in support of their rights, additional personnel are being trained to prevent and respond to sexual and other forms of violence against women, and more countries are implementing national action plans or related strategies. The establishment of national focal point networks for women and peace and security is step forward in strengthening the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and in assisting Member States and regional organizations through the exchange of best practices and by improving coordination, funding and assistance programmes.

Despite these improvements, including several judicial cases of conflict-related sexual violence, violations of the rights of women and girls persist, including by non-State actors and terrorist organizations that attack the fundamental rights of women as part of their political agendas, making women and children the main victims in conflict and post-conflicts situations. We urge States to comply with international, humanitarian, refugee and human rights law and to hold violators accountable. The equitable participation and full involvement of women in preventive diplomacy and related decision-making processes regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding have been highlighted by the Security Council and are attested to by the high quality of gender expertise provided by the United Nations in relevant mediation processes.

In Angola, women's participation was decisive to the attainment of peace. After the end of the armed conflict, their direct involvement in peacebuilding efforts was instrumental in providing psychological support to the victims as counsellors of peace, in national reconciliation and in strengthening social cohesion. Moreover, relevant measures were adopted promoting women's empowerment, and women are currently playing a crucial role in the political, economic and social life of the country.

Following the review of resolution 1325 (2000), significant progress was made in formulating a national action plan, which has already been drafted by the Commission for Social Policy and is due to be approved soon by the Council of Ministers. The action plan sets out seven objectives, with specified activities, goals and indicators of performance aimed at increasing the participation of women and integrating gender equality into the prevention and resolution of conflicts; the training and empowerment of women, girls and boys focused on gender equality and gender-based violence, the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights, their empowerment and education; the participation of civil society in preventing and eliminating gender-based violence; raising awareness and knowledge of the women and peace and security agenda in all ministerial departments, including a gender-perspective in the national budget with a view to fulfilling the commitments set out in resolution 1325 (2000); promoting women's socioeconomic development in rural communities; increasing food security and contributing to poverty eradication.

Finally, we support the systematic inclusion of provisions related to preventing conflict-related sexual violence in relevant country-specific resolutions and in the mandates of special political and peacekeeping missions, and to increasing the inclusion of women and gender advisers. We attach utmost importance to the empowerment of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts by making them full participants in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): As the penholder on women and peace and security, I want first to welcome all of our numerous guests today and to thank the Secretary-General and Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for their briefings and all the work they do on this agenda.

I also want to pay tribute to Rita Lopidia for her briefing. Sha has given us a valuable insight into what "women and peace and security" really means on the ground in South Sudan. I commend the work that she and others like her are doing to turn the words "peace" and "security" into a reality. I also want to welcome the fact that Russia, in organizing this debate, has accepted the importance both of the women and peace and security agenda and of the role of civil society on this and, I hope, on other issues. Talking of civil society, I want to pick up one of Rita's points and assure her that the United Kingdom will invite civil society to brief in country-specific meetings under our presidency in March, and I call on other presidencies to do the same.

More broadly, it is not enough to support the women and peace and security agenda today, one day a year. Words spoken in this Chamber are not enough. Commitment means action every day throughout the year in mandate renewals and other negotiations, here and in capitals. And sadly, the reality at the moment is that women and girls continue to be affected inordinately by conflict and insecurity in Syria, in South Sudan and in so many other places. And to compound the injustice, while women's lives are on the line, their voices are seldom heard in the pursuit of peace. We need only look at the gender balance of the Council.

And yet, in this very Chamber a year ago, we all committed to doing something about it — to take the words of resolution 2242 (2015), which I was proud to draft with Román, and turn them into something meaningful, something real. We have had a year — a year to increase the effective participation of women in peace processes; a year to increase women's roles in the military and peacekeeping; a year to increase the finance to support all this work and more. So how have we got on? Well, let me take those three points — participation, peacekeeping and money — in turn.

On the first, over the past year the United Kingdom has been pushing to get women a seat at the negotiating table, and not just because it is the right thing to do. We are doing so because it works. As the Secretary-General and Samantha reminded us, when women are at the table the chances of peace increase by 20 to 35 per cent. And yet less than one in ten negotiators is a woman. In Yemen, United Kingdom support has enabled the United Nations Special Envoy to employ an expert on women's political participation. It has enabled a UN-Women project to boost the influence of Yemeni

women in the peace process. And in Syria, we have worked hard to ensure that women's views are heard, including through support for the Women's Advisory Board and the Women's Consultative Committee that Carolyn rightly mentioned.

Some would say that this counts for very little when the bombs still fall — that these are just token gestures. But as many of my colleagues have done, let us look at Colombia. The guns have fallen silent. The negotiations included a gender subcommission. Three delegations of women's organizations held talks with the negotiating team in Havana. Those are not token gestures. They are meaningful steps towards bringing a sustainable end to more than 50 years of war, and I am proud of the diplomatic and financial support from the United Kingdom that has helped to make that happen.

Secondly, however, we must match those steps at the negotiating table in United Nations peacekeeping missions and our own militaries. Women have as much of a role to play in keeping the peace as in negotiating it. That is why the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting, held in London last month, included such a strong focus on women and peace and security, as Siti reminded us earlier. More than 60 countries signed our ambitious communiqué, and we now need to deliver on it, doubling the number of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations by 2020, increasing the number of women in missions as a whole and tackling every single allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse until such horrific practices end. Our efforts should not stop at peacekeeping. The United Kingdom is updating the training that our armed forces receive so that everyone understands the agenda on women and peace and security and knows how to prevent sexual violence in conflict. And we will be doing the same for the troops we train from other countries, too.

Finally, an increase in our ambitions for women and peace and security should be matched by an increase in the financing underpinning it. That includes more support for the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI), and for UN-Women and civil society. It means making our development spending gender-sensitive, something that the United Kingdom continually strives for. And in the most basic terms, it means increasing our spending on projects related to women and peace and security. The United Kingdom has increased its spending by more than 50 per cent, to $10 million in this financial year, including $1 million for the GAI, and I hope others will do the same.

But in conclusion, we need something more than money. We need leaders — leaders like Rita Lopidia. We did not choose a woman to be the next Secretary-General, but in António Guterres we have chosen a true champion of gender parity, and in appointing a gender-balanced transition team, he is already off to a good start. We look to him to continue that work when he begins in earnest, and to help to make the second anniversary of resolution 2242 (2015) an even greaters success.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Next year my country — and, we believe, others far from its borders — will mark the centenary of an event that has left a deep imprint on world history, the October Revolution. As we look back on it today, our assessments of its impact may be mixed, but one is indisputable — it enshrined the full equality for women in our country that has become firmly established on the global socioeconomic and political agenda. In a certain sense, the work the Security Council has been doing in the past 16 years is a continuation of that process, begun a century ago.

Since 2000, the Security Council has traditionally held an open debate on women and peace and security in the month of October. Sixteen years ago, our delegation wholeheartedly supported the Security Council's consideration of this agenda item. As Mr. Sergey Lavrov, the then Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, noted at the Council's first meeting on the subject, women

> "are an enormous strength and can provide invaluable assistance in reconciling belligerents and tending the wounds of war" (*S/PV.4208, p. 21*).

The annual debate in the Council always evokes great interest among delegations and presents a good opportunity for analysing progress in achieving the goals that have been set and how to increase the effectiveness of our efforts. In the years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), much has been done to turn its provisions into concrete action aimed at improving the protection of women in armed conflicts and ensuring their full and effective participation in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The women and peace and security agenda has had increasing attention both from the Security Council and the United Nations system in general, as the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/822) testifies. While it is vital to ensure that the work begun continues, it is important to ensure that in developing complex approaches we do not end up neglecting the specifics of a given situation, and that the inclusion of gender perspectives in that work does not become an end in itself. The best results come when we avoid grandstanding and focus on specific returns. That fully applies to developing national action plans, which can be an effective tool for concerned States when they become involved in an armed conflict.

Where my country is concerned, we are not about to start preparing this type of national plan. Instead, work is under way in Russia on a document of a different kind — the Russian Federation's national strategy for action for women 2017 -2022. Its key areas of focus include increasing women's participation in political life and the decision-making process; improving their economic situation, including promoting entrepreneurship for women; creating conditions conducive to better women's health; preventing violence and protecting women from it; and overcoming stereotypes about men's and women's social roles.

We should point out that in our country women occupy a number of leading Government posts — the President of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly, Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Central Bank, the Ministers of Health and Education and a number of other responsible positions. Women also play a very significant part in the work of the State Duma. They make up 17 per cent — six of 36 officers — of Russian police contingents abroad.

We agree with the Secretary-General's recommendation on the need to strengthen the coordination of United Nations entities in order to accommodate gender mainstreaming in the context of armed conflict. However, it is important to ensure that they avoid duplication and contradictory action and that their efforts are based on reliable sources of information. The programmes and projects produced by the Secretariat's experts should be submitted for intergovernmental discussion and follow-up approval. It is after all the States that play the lead role in implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

No less important is ensuring that the Security Council's work is focused on issues related to its mandate. Artificially connecting the entire gamut of gender issues to Council activity will lead to an imbalance from the point of view of system-wide coordination and create obstacles to effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Council should focus its attention primarily on the situation of women in extremely serious, large-scale armed conflicts. That goal corresponds to the inclusion of a gender component in the Secretary-General's reports on specific country situations. Needless to say, that does not diminish the urgent task of combating threats women's lives and security caused by the barbarities of terrorist groups.

I would like to once again affirm our belief in the importance of ensuring that the international community gives proper attention to the situation of women in armed conflict and their participation in peacemaking. At the same time, of course, we should remember that there is no more reliable way to protect humankind, including women and children, from the horrors of war than resolving crisis situations as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, I am compelled to make one more observation. Not for the first time, today the representative of Ukraine strayed a long way beyond the confines of our discussion to touch on the general topic of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. That would not exist were it not for the fact that Kyiv took the route of armed suppression of the mood of protest that emerged in the country after the Government was overthrown with direct support from external forces. Ukrainian forces have been shelling residential areas of Donetsk and Luhansk for two years now, killing peaceful civilians, including women and children.

As far as the attitude of the Ukrainian authorities to women is concerned, I will simply cite a few facts from a recent report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. On 19 January 2015, some men in masks and camouflage arrested a woman in her home. For more than a week, they kept her in a basement in a Ukrainian Security Service building, where they beat and tortured her with electric shocks and burning plastic. They threatened to rape her daughter if she refused to confess. In another case, in June 2015, 10 armed men in masks and black uniforms arrested another woman. They put her in the basement of an unfinished building where they beat her head and body with their fists and

a metal tube while threatening to rape and kill her. As of August, the woman was still in detention. Those are just two of the many examples that members can read about in the report.

I would like to add that the conflict in eastern Ukraine would have been resolved long ago had the Kyiv authorities not time and again tried to rewrite or tinker with the Minsk agreement reached a year and a half ago. There was a reference to Nadiya Savchenko in the statement by the representative of Ukraine. She returned to Russia, where she stated that Kyiv should apologize to the inhabitants of Donetsk and Luhansk. It is a pity that the Government has neither the humanity nor the political will to do so.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation can be provided accurately.

I should like to inform participants that, given the long list of speakers, we will continue with this meeting through the lunch hour, and perhaps into the evening. Speakers who wish to make a second intervention will be able to do so once all those on the list of speakers has been exhausted.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden.

Ms. Söder (Sweden): I am honoured to address the Security Council at this yearly open debate. In fact, this is a debate on peace and security, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. It is about the core business of the Council, not an add-on or an ad hoc discussion on women and girls. The full and effective participation of women and girls in peace processes is a necessary condition for sustaining peace and for durable and equitable peace for all. We strongly support the call of Secretary-General-designate António Guterres for a surge in peace diplomacy and his manifest dedication to achieving gender equality. They go hand in hand. We are convinced that to succeed such a surge must put the participation of women and girls at centre stage. That will guide us as we prepare to assume our seat in the Council in January.

Both the world and the Council have made progress, but we are still falling short. The task facing the Council is to close the gap between ambition and reality. After the global study and the adoption of the corresponding resolution 2242 (2015) last year, our full attention should be directed to carrying out our tasks to effectively integrate and operationalize the women and peace and security agenda in the daily business of the Council. I would like to highlight some areas where we see a need for improvement.

First, we must adopt a gender equality perspective from the very outset, with a focus on the objective of strengthening the situation of women and girls in conflict situations. Their needs, challenges and opportunities must be brought to the attention of the Council — by the Secretariat, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN-Women and others — and acted upon. A continued dialogue with women's organizations and the relevant stakeholders in the field, through the various parts of the United Nations system, is therefore paramount. The Council should be actively engaging with them.

Secondly, there is a need to improve data collection, including sex-disaggregated statistics. Too often, we make decisions based on incomplete data and analysis. We cannot afford to fail to grasp the root causes of conflict or to identify peace dividends and agents. For instance, mothers, sisters, wives and daughters often know where small arms are, and they are more likely to see to it that they are handed in in under disarmament programmes. They need to be part of such programmes from their design to their implementation. For that to happen, we need proper data. The Security Council and the Secretariat should jointly endeavour to ensure that the basis for every decision has a solid and actionable gender perspective.

Thirdly, there is a need to ensure the full and effective participation of women and girls in peace processes. That requires the Security Council to adopt strong mandates on participation, but also that we strengthen our follow-up on such mandates. We need to make sure that guidance is implemented and that national efforts are recognized and supported, or encouraged and requested if missing. We should hold United Nations mediators, peacekeeping missions and political missions accountable to their women-and-peace-and-security mandates. That is how we can assist Colombian women in following through on

their remarkable peace work; or help Afghan girls to receive an education; or Somali women to be properly represented in the next legislative assembly.

Fourthly, we must incentivize through financing and other means. We must make sure that enough resources are dedicated to realizing this agenda. The 15 per cent target in the three peace and security reviews is a step in the right direction, but only as a first step. I am glad that the Peacebuilding Fund is leading by example.

Conversely, we should critically review peace and security missions, operations, projects and programmes that do not meaningfully address gender equality or provide for the participation of women and girls. We should consider discontinuing funding to those that do not. Indeed, there is an acute need to gender-mainstream the United Nations regular and peacekeeping budgets. Sweden believes that the Secretary-General should be asked, in the outline draft resolution for the next biennium, to present proposals on how to address that shortcoming.

I am pleased to represent a feminist Government with a feminist foreign policy. In that context, Sweden naturally follows the work on women and peace and security. For us this is about our three R's: rights, representation and resources. We will pursue this agenda intensely during our term in the Security Council, not only because it is right but also because it is smart. We count on the partnership of all members of the Council. More women simply means more peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Given that Sweden will become a non-permanent member of the Security Council beginning in January, the statement just delivered by its representative is very promising.

I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Amolo (Kenya): Allow me to recognize the presence earlier of the Secretary-General and that of my sister the redoubtable Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, as well as to add the compliments of my delegation to those of other delegations for the convening this important discussion on women and peace and security.

Kenya welcomes the report (S/2016/822) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security and takes note of the recommendations and conclusions therein. They provide useful information on key areas that need to be reinforced to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted a year after Kenya's tenure on the Security Council came to an end. Kenya commends the Security Council for its sustained, committed engagement to the agenda on women and peace and security over the past 16 years. Kenya's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, is unequivocal. It is further underlined by our full support at the regional level of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. I am pleased to inform the Council that our Government has undertaken a number of far-reaching measures to that end.

In 2016, Kenya launched a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), aptly entitled "Kuhusisha Wanawake ni Kudumisha Amani" — which in Kiswahili means "To Involve Women is to Sustain Peace" — that encompasses the changing nature of insecurity by incorporating women's human security.

Secondly, the action plan will continue to mainstream resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) into Kenya's national development framework. The national plan also takes into account progress made by Kenya in advancing the promotion and protection of women and girls, in accordance with the Kenyan Constitution and intergovernmental and regional policies related to security, peacebuilding and conflict resolution; in improving the quality of women's participation in their contribution to security at the national level by increasing their numbers through well-targeted recruitment; and in developing programmes at the National Defence College that integrate gender training for troops prior to deployment in peacekeeping operations undertaken in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Kenyan Constitution, promulgated in 2010, now addresses structural discrimination challenges and protects and guarantees fundamental freedoms and the civic and socioeconomic rights of men and women equally. Based on our national experience, I would like to underscore the important role that education, capacity-building and communication can play in combatting violence against women and girls. Kenya therefore urges all stakeholders, Member State and the United Nations to prioritize education and the creation of awareness of the critical role of women in peacebuilding, peace and security.

As the current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Kenya has been at the forefront of efforts to operationalize the United Nations women and peace and security agenda. On 7 September, the Commission adopted a gender strategy to promote gender-sensitive peacebuilding. The strategy acknowledges the vital role of women's leadership and participation in conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Kenya urges all Member States to address issues relating to existing gaps. I am convinced that only thus can we meet our collective commitments to women, peace and security. We therefore welcome the cogent remarks made by the representative of the penholder, the United Kingdom, advocating for champions and leaders, and we were happy to note that the representative of Sweden is a good candidate for such a champion.

Kenya also appreciates the comments made by the representative of China, assigning additional blame to terrorists in blatantly targeting women, especially in our continent, Africa. Earlier today, the President of our Republic, His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, condemned in the strongest terms a terrorist attack in Mandera by such depraved individuals. We also appreciate Japan's forward-looking approach to enabling the World Assembly of Women meeting next year in Japan. It is therefore necessary that we provide predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, target more funds towards gender equality, and support special funds, such as the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and the United Nations Fund for Gender Equality.

Finally, Kenya believes that if the issue of the diversion of resources from development to waging war is not urgently addressed, our efforts to meet our commitments to women and girls will continue to lag behind.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Ms. Ibrahim (Nigeria): I thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for convening this open debate and for the excellent concept paper (S/2016/871, annex) provided to guide our discussions.

Our appreciation goes to the Secretary-General for his abiding investment in the cause of women, to the Executive Director of UN-Women for her lucid presentation, and to the non-governmental organization representative for sharing her perspective.

Nigeria welcomes the opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda 16 years after the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). While we acknowledge the substantial achievements made in this endeavour, there are still challenges and significant gaps yet to be addressed. They include the participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles, more involvement of women in the prevention of conflict and peace efforts, insufficient funds, lack of disaggregated data, forced displacement exacerbated by persistent armed conflict, and continuing unprecedented levels of sexual violence and assault. It is our expectation that this debate could offer prospective solutions to address the prevailing challenges and gaps, and suggestions for acquiring the needed resources to advance the role of women within the context of the global peace and security architecture.

Meeting these challenges is critical to making progress on the women and peace and security agenda. This will require a multi-stakeholder approach involving actors at the global, regional, subregional and national levels. Communities, civil society and individuals also have a crucial role to play.

At the global level, we acknowledge that the Security Council has provided the leadership necessary to give impetus to the women and peace and security agenda, beginning with resolution 1325 (2000), which set up the framework for subsequent Council resolutions upon which the women and peace and security agenda was built.

In Africa, the African Union has been a useful platform for the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda. It is to be noted that the African Union Agenda 2063, which was adopted by African Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in January, places particular emphasis on the engagement of women and youth in the continent's development.

At the subregional level in West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been a major driver of the women and peace and security agenda. In collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa, in September 2010 ECOWAS developed an integrated plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan of action emphasizes the importance of the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, mediation

and peacebuilding efforts, as well as the rebuilding of post-conflict societies.

Consistent with the subregional efforts, in August 2013 Nigeria launched a national action plan to fully implement the relevant provisions of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan reflects the Federal Government's commitment to ensuring the security of women and girls during armed conflict and enhancing their active and direct participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Nigeria is also committed to the provisions of resolution 1820 (2008), on ending acts of sexual violence against women in conflict situations.

We are collaborating with our neighbours Chad, Cameroon, the Niger and Benin, within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force , to fight the Boko Haram insurgency, which is targeting women and girls. Our experience today is evidence that with determined international collaboration, terrorism can be defeated. The sustained efforts of Nigeria and its international partners have culminated in the liberation of territories previously occupied by Boko Haram.

It is to be noted that 80 per cent of the 2 million internally displaced persons in the north-east of Nigeria are women and girls. We have taken concrete steps to address their humanitarian needs and to ensure that the necessary conditions are established to enable the voluntary return of the displaced persons to their places of origin in safety and dignity. Indeed, as a sequel to the aforementioned efforts, 21 of the captured Chibok girls were released last week. The efforts will continue until the remaining ones are eventually released.

We acknowledge the contributions of civil society organizations as partners in the prevention, management and resolution of disputes. The Nigerian Government will continue to engage them as key stakeholders and partners in the women and peace and security agenda. Nigeria remains fully and firmly committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. We shall work assiduously to enhance the participation of women in peace and security initiatives. We are determined to reinforce and implement the principles of resolution 1325 (2000) and, within that context, to address the factors that impact negatively on the lives of women and girls.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Bokhari (Norway): I am honoured to be making this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. I would like to thank all the previous speakers, and not least Ms. Lopidia for her powerful statement reminding us all of why we are here.

The eighth resolution, resolution 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security was adopted at last year's open debate (see S/PV.7533). Never before had so many countries sponsored a Security Council resolution. Never before had so many statements been made. We made commitments; we created expectations and we were right to do so, because by then we knew what we used to just believe. Where women are included and can exert an influence, we are more likely to reach a peace agreement and the peace is more likely to last. Where women are involved in peacekeeping, the operation enjoys more trust and is more effective. Where there is political will, sexual violence can be addressed, even in humanitarian crises.

Yet, in spite of our knowledge and experience, in spite of our commitments, we still have a long way to go. Women are still excluded from many processes that will decide their future. Women are still suffering abuse and even being targeted directly. We are still not tapping into the resources of 50 per cent of our populations when it matters the most. But steps have been taken. We welcome the new Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security that briefs the Security Council, and we welcome the national focal points network that has been formed to ensure greater accountability. We welcome UN-Women's new flagship on women and peace and security. And on the ground, in spite of the challenges ahead, the Colombia process has raised the bar.

From now on, women will expect to take part. Civil society will demand to be heard. More stakeholders will want to have a say, because it has been done before. And even though the Syria talks are not moving in the direction we hoped, the Geneva process has achieved something new: women and civil society are consulted regularly through innovative formal mechanisms. We now have very concrete examples of inclusion. We have been very happy to support these developments.

Inspired by a South African initiative, a Nordic network of women mediators was launched in November last year in Oslo. This means that Nordic women now form a part of a global network of women mediators,

whose experience and competence we should draw on in future peace and security operations. To refer to the lack of competent women is no longer a viable excuse.

Finland and Norway are also cooperating with the Department of Political Affairs on the training of senior United Nations mediators. As sustaining peace is coming to the forefront of the United Nations peace and security efforts, the Nordic countries are working to ensure that the women and peace and security agenda is at the heart of this effort. Importantly, as we work to prevent and counter violent extremism, we support women's organizations and youth networks, because we believe that they are key players. We listen to them in our policy development and support them through concrete programmes. The Norwegian Prime Minister recently launched a new dialogue forum for women peacemakers on the front lines of violent extremism and policymakers at the highest level. Training is crucial to raise awareness and improve implementation of the gender aspects of peacekeeping missions. That is why the Nordic countries established the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations. In September, the Swedish Armed Forces issued a handbook for gender mainstreaming in operations, the very first of its kind.

In this context, we would also like to express our strong support for the proposal by Spain and the United Kingdom regarding a framework for a strengthened Gender Advisory/Women, Peace and Security Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. This would enhance the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in both the short- and the long-term perspectives.

The Nordic countries deploy many women to United Nations peace operations: 35 per cent of the police officers deployed by Norway and 50 per cent of those deployed by Sweden are women and 40 per cent of all personnel Finland sends to civilian crisis management operations are women. Women made up 50 per cent of the experts deployed by the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit last year. This is because we know that gender balance makes our contingents better. We also support the African Union and several African countries in their endeavours to train more women and to ensure that their police forces are gender responsive.

Sexual violence destroys both individuals and communities and it undermines peace and development. That is why the Nordic countries are focusing on preventing and combating such atrocities. We are engaged in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, which is currently led by Sweden. We work with the African Union and we support United Nations action, Justice Rapid Response and civil society.

The Nordic countries will continue to promote the 1325 (2000) agenda wherever there are discussions about peace and security, because we want peace and we want a peace that lasts.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Marinaki: First and foremost, we would like to extend our special thanks to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822) and for her excellent leadership in promoting the agenda of UN-Women and also to Ms. Rita Lopidia for her moving testimony. It is an honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States. I would like to express our appreciation to the Russian Federation, as the President of the Security Council, for organizing this open debate.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The full and effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda remains a priority for the European Union. The global strategy on the European Union's foreign and security policy sets a clear direction that women and peace and security will continue to be mainstreamed into all our external action. We firmly stand by our commitments set out one year ago and we promote as a priority the women and peace and security agenda. We have actively followed up on our pledges based on four main priorities.

First, we have promoted women's participation and leadership and we remain committed to leading by example, such as in the case of the conclusion of Iranian nuclear issue agreement in 2015, where High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ms. Federica Mogherini, as well as Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Ms. Helga Schmid, were leading the European

Union's negotiating team and now they are leading and providing proper guidance to the important next implementation phase. Out of our 10 civilian crisis management missions, five are now led by women. From Syria to Kosovo to South Sudan, we have been using our influence externally to support women's participation in peace and security processes and in humanitarian work.

Secondly, we have taken action against sexual and gender-based violence in conflict with a strong focus on the humanitarian dimension. We have funded transitional justice processes in Kosovo, Colombia and the Philippines to help address past abuses. We are supporting projects in Ukraine and Burundi to tackle the use of violence against women. Our humanitarian projects that address sexual and gender-based violence have reached almost 3.5 million direct beneficiaries and we continue to support the excellent work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura.

Thirdly, we have further integrated gender into countering emerging threats, including terrorism and violent extremism, and in engaging women directly in tackling the root causes of violence and extremism. We have financed diverse community-based projects across the Horn of Africa, in Pakistan and in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Fourthly, we have strengthened our cooperative frameworks, both within the European Union and with our external partners. In June we also reconfirmed our strategic partnership with UN-Women, and we are finalizing the European gender focal points network and the women, peace and security national focal points network to connect all European stakeholders through the agenda on gender and women and peace and security. We have made progress in meeting the substantial financial commitment we pledged a year ago, and we will shortly publish new project proposals to contribute to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in partner countries.

Let me conclude by reaffirming our commitment as expressed during last year's debate (see S/PV.7533). The United Nations can continue to rely fully on the European Union's support, including in better, more broadly, faster and more effectively promoting the women and peace and security agenda worldwide.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and Security Council members for their statements in support of the participation of women in my country's peace process. I would also like to thank Ms. Rita Lopidia and her organization for having shared her testimony. She can rest assured that her appeal to the international community on behalf of women from Colombian civil society who are seeking to build peace to make sure that the agreement reached in Havana is safeguarded will not fall on deaf ears.

My delegation thanks the Russian presidency for convening this open debate, almost 16 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). The President's concept paper (S/2016/871, annex), which his delegation disseminated for the debate, states that all of the studies that the Secretary-General commissioned last year point to a significant link between the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution and the effectiveness and sustainability of the subsequent rebuilding. That conclusion was reflected in last year's resolution 2242 (2015). We must continue to prioritize the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding, and States must fully assume the responsibility of safeguarding and guaranteeing women's rights in a safe and suitable environment.

In Colombia, as we close a difficult chapter of the hemisphere's most protracted conflict, we understand that women and girls play a fundamental and proactive role in the building of the peace we so desire. We can say that the process has been a new, almost unprecedented experience. It is the first time that a gender focus is expressly included, not only through the participation of women as fully empowered members of both the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerillas and the Government, but also through the creation and work of a gender subcommission — that the Secretary-General and many of delegations recognized this morning — which, through often difficult but respectful dialogue, bore fruit as all resulting chapters of the final peace agreement provide concrete gender-specific provisions.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) on women and peace and security indicates, women accounted for up to a third of the participants at the table, approximately half of those participating in the consultations and over 60 per cent of the victims and the experts that visited the negotiation table in Havana.

We recognize that civil society, especially women's organizations, have spurred that rebuilding and the future adherence to the agenda for women's rights. That is why they are now strategic State partners in the search for that shared goal. Although challenges remain, the Government's resolve to overcoming them is underpinned by its commitment to offering women reparations for the injuries they have suffered, guarantees that the abuses will not recur and preventive measures. My country will continue to promote a culture free of all forms of discrimination and violence. To that end, we have signed on to the recently created Women, Peace and Security National Focal Points Network, an initiative led by Spain and other regional countries.

In conclusion, in spite of the difficult results of the 2 October referendum, the Government has called for a national dialogue to bring together all parties to help reach an agreement and its implementation as soon as possible. The commitment to gender equity and peace was strengthened on 21 October when President Santos and 109 women's organizations reaffirmed their support for the peace agreement and welcomed the fact that victims' rights were at the heart of the agreement and that the fundamental role of women and girls in peacebuilding was recognized. The President of Colombia will continue to strive for peace until the very end of his mandate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank the Russian Federation for having convened this debate, and the Secretary-General and the two briefers for their unflagging commitment to this issue.

When it comes to peacebuilding, the international community's record this past year is uninspiring. Not since 1945 have there been so many displaced persons, many of whom are women and young girls. Armed conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq are ongoing, causing immense suffering to their civilian populations. In these challenging times, it is essential to promote partnerships with civil society, and in particular with women's networks. Colombia is a perfect example of the role that civil society women's networks can play in peace and peacebuilding efforts. In that regard, I thank the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and all affiliated organizations for their tireless efforts to promote the women and peace and security agenda here in New York.

Switzerland's national action plan is a Government instrument that contemplates a participative mechanism designed specifically for civil society. This year will see the third review of that plan. In that regard, civil society organizations have drafted an alternative implementation report. Switzerland will consider its conclusions when it updates the national action plan in 2017. Reports on the implementation of the national action plan are regularly submitted for parliamentary oversight. As for the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken last year, we would like to highlight three points.

First of all, in order to support political dialogue in Libya and the process of drafting the constitution, Switzerland has facilitated women's discussion groups. Thirty-eight women's groups of different backgrounds negotiated and drew up a peace programme, which they launched at a high-level meeting in Geneva in November 2015.

Secondly, non-State armed groups must be considered in the implementation of the agenda on women and peace and security. Switzerland continues its efforts to facilitate direct dialogue with those groups, which must recognize the principles of international humanitarian law and commit to respecting existing rules, including those regarding sexual and gender-based violence. In that connection, Switzerland supports the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice, a non-governmental organization that aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate former child soldiers of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda and victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by providing psychosocial support and access to medical assistance. The project also contributes to holding perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence accountable under national and international law. For example, the documentation of sexual and gender-based violence that was made possible through this project was used against two Congolese rebel leaders at the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, sexual and gender-based violence is a major, pressing issue. Accordingly, Switzerland will make sexual and gender-based violence a priority in its humanitarian commitments. That will include fostering access for victims to various services, mainstreaming the topic in the various areas of humanitarian aid and supporting partner humanitarian organizations in their work in the area of sexual and gender-based violence.

Switzerland continues to be one of the major donors to UN-Women and has increased its contribution to CHF48 million Swiss for the period from 2015 to 2017. Earlier this month, we also inaugurated the new UN-Women Liaison Office at Geneva. As the Secretary-General stated, Member States continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for implementing the agenda for women and peace and security. Switzerland is ready to embrace that role and renews its commitment to the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Russian Federation for convening this annual debate on women and peace and security. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the representative of civil society for their briefings.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see S/2015/490) and the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) mandated under resolution 2122 (2013) can only give new momentum to the role played by women in conflict situations, the inclusion of a gender perspective in all phases of peace processes and the importance of increasing women's participation in the prevention of, and response to, conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction.

Althouh we acknowledge that progress has been made in implementing the agenda, it has not been widespread, owing to geographical and political limitations. It is therefore important that we take this opportunity to review the peace agenda to renew the commitment of the membership and advocate for women and the gender perspective as core aspects in international peacekeeping and security, and, above all, the role of women and development in peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) has served to establish a paradigm shift in the United Nations international peace and security agenda with regard to the concept of sustainable peace. Sustainable peace requires comprehensive and long-term approaches that link political action, security, justice, development, and the promotion of human rights in support of national efforts, in which women play a central role. In particular, we recognize the need to foster greater participation by women in United Nations initiatives relating to conflict prevention, mediation, the cessation of hostilities, disarmament and the monitoring of peace agreements.

In that regard, Mexico highlights the successful case of Colombia, where the negotiations process leading up to the peace agreement in that country was marked by the significant presence and participation of women. We also acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations Mission in Colombia to maximize the number of women as observers and in all other roles. The approaches followed in Colombia must become the norm. Accordingly, we support calls upon the Secretary-General to appoint more women mediators and women leaders of mediation groups and to ensure that United Nations-launched mediation processes incorporate a gender perspective. Similarly, gender perspectives and the specific needs of women must be comprehensively included in all peace agreements.

It is essential that the activities carried out by a peacekeeping or special political mission take into account the specific needs of women and girls and recognize the importance of their participation in interactions with local communities. We therefore support the idea of peacekeeping operations integrating a gender perspective, starting from the planning phase and in all other phases, and we support the integration of gender advisers into such operations so as to provide specific and differentiated attention to women and girls who fall victim to conflict and violence. We acknowledge that 16 peacekeeping operations already have units or focal points dedicated to gender issues, and we call for the same effort to be made in special political missions, as there are gender experts in only 6 out of the 10 ongoing missions. In that regard, we also underscore that the deployment of a greater number of women on the ground, as well as an increase in the number of female personnel in the national armies of States Members, continues to be a priority.

Crises are not neutral in nature from a gender perspective. Armed conflicts affect women more because, unfortunately, sexual abuse and exploitation have become a weapon of war. Mexico condemns in the strongest terms the violence and sexual exploitation to which women and girls have been subjected in situations of armed conflict. For that reason, our country is a regional champion of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative.

My country commends the actions taken by the Secretary-General to prevent sexual abuse by personnel serving under the United Nations flag. Such acts must not be allowed to happen again. We particularly welcome the appointment of a special coordinator to deal with those issues and call upon all troop-contributing countries to strictly implement the zero-tolerance policy in connection with the commission of sexual abuse by their personnel. At the same time, we support international efforts to harmonize the training of military, police and civilian personnel in issues involving gender and the prevention of sexual abuse.

Mexico also expresses its concern with regard to the alarming increase in the use of sexual violence as a tactic by terrorist groups, particularly those involved in armed conflict. On that account, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to identify gender equality as one of the priorities of his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and we see it as a positive sign that General Assembly resolution 70/291, which was the culmination of the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, highlights the importance of promoting greater synergies among Member States, the United Nations and women's organizations in developing strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Finally, I reiterate Mexico's commitment to the full implementation of the sustainable peace agenda, while comprehensively promoting programmes that meet the specific needs of women in connection with prevention and conflict in all of its phases.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing and strong leadership in advancing the women and peace and security agenda. We also welcome the briefin made by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the important civil-society perspective that we were provided with this morning.

The 2015 high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), mandated under resolution 2122 (2013), provided an important opportunity not only to reflect on the progress made towards the implementation of the resolution, but also to calibrate our collective ambition to promote our shared goal of strengthening the role of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and transitional justice systems.

Resolution 2242 (2015) reaffirmed our strong commitment to the normative framework that views women as a pivotal element of the conflict-resolution paradigm. We also welcome resolution 2250 (2015), on youth and peace and security, as an important complement and reinforcement of the women and peace and security agenda.

Women across the world, from Columbia to Uganda to Burundi to Tunisia, have emerged as leaders and consensus-builders, thus inspiring hope of peace and prosperity amid conflict, chaos and violence. Yet millions of women and girls remain among the most vulnerable in situations of armed conflict. The perpetrators of crimes against women and girls include Da'esh and Boko Haram, as well as States that use sexual abuse as a weapon of war. In our region we have seen thousands of women fall victim to brutal oppression; countless others have suffered rape and sexual abuse — the worst and the most traumatic form of violence.

We agree with the Secretary-General that, despite the momentum for change, support must go beyond words. Renewed focus on the implementation of the common agenda is therefore crucial. That is key to overcoming operational gaps and challenges and to delivering on our promise of peace and security. As agents for peace, women also have a vital role to play in achieving sustainable development, because peace and development, as we all agree, are inextricably linked. The empowerment of women is therefore also essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including those on poverty eradication, health care, education and inclusive development.

Women's special skills in mediation make them particularly suited as Special Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, yet they have had very few such missions. That clearly needs to change.

Pakistan fully supports the objectives of the women and peace and security agenda and has played an important role in advancing those goals as a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Pakistani women peacekeepers have served as police officers — brave police officers — and as doctors and nurses in missions in Asia, Africa and the Balkans. Gender sensitization is a mandatory part of training

for our peacekeepers. My country stands ready to share our experience by conducting training programmes for women security officers so as to enhance their capacity to respond to crisis situations.

As host to the largest protracted refugee population in the world, Pakistan has allowed unhindered access by Afghan refugees, including women and girls, to free education and health care and has enabled them to secure employment. It is gratifying to note that the core skills acquired by our Afghan sisters in Pakistan are being used for the welfare of their homeland, Afghanistan.

Pakistan firmly believes that the best way to promote and safeguard the interests of women in conflict situations is to address the root causes of those conflicts and address cross-cutting issues of governance. That would require synergy of efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution. We also believe that the Security Council should continue to address the issues of the women and peace and security, in accordance with its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Any digression from that mandate, or proliferation of new mandates, runs the risk of undermining the consensus around the vital issue.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): I thank the presidency of Russia for putting the spotlight on the women and peace and security agenda, and the Secretary-General for his insightful recommendations in his annual report (S/2016/822). We express our warm appreciation to the UN-Women Executive Director and her team. We also thank Ms. Rita Lopidia, a civil society representative.

We commend the ongoing mechanisms set in place after the 2015 high-level review panels on peacekeeping and peacebuilding and the 15-year review of resolution 1325 (2000), which powerfully highlighted the women and peace and security agenda. Notable among these mechanisms are the Security Council's new Informal Expert Group, the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, the network of women and peace and security national focal points and the Peacebuilding Commission's gender strategy.

At the same time, despite laudable strides made, there is still insufficient participation and leadership by women, both in times of conflict and of peace. As the Secretary-General underscored in his report, the overall share of women is either at the same level or has even regressed in many key areas. It is therefore essential to bridge the gap between intent and implementation and between word and action. There is a need to increase the availability of gender-disaggregated data and of reports on progress towards implementing and monitoring these commitments, to step up intense capacity-building and to formulate strong new pro-women policies and legislation. We need women to be engaged in mediation and conflict resolution and in post-conflict and recovery phases, with closer coordination by the relevant United Nations entities.

Global processes are effective only when they become strongly rooted on the ground. Allow me to elaborate the steps taken by Kazakhstan to support global efforts.

In collaboration with the Multi-Country Office of UN-Women in Almaty, regional organizations, the Parliament and civil society, Kazakhstan has formulated its 1325 National Action Plan with a designated budget, to be adopted this December. We will enhance training on gender equality for the armed and security forces, promote the participation of women soldiers in peacekeeping operations and strictly implement the zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence. We will ensure that women are present on mediation teams and will appoint gender advisers, or focal points, in the relevant ministries and departments. We will work to achieve the global target of earmarking 15 per cent of our official development assistance for women and peace and security. In 2017, we will set out monitoring frameworks with progress indicators to assess these targets.

We recognize the vital role of women in United Nations peacekeeping and conflict resolution. We are presently contributing by deploying our highly qualified military observers with gender competence to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. Kazakhstan has signed the London Communiqué, which, among other topics, highlights the role of women in peacekeeping. We also support the new United Nations initiative for the appointment of more women in senior United Nations leadership positions and, at the same time, doubling the number of

women in the United Nations peacekeeping operations by 2020.

We welcome the close links between peace, security and sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — the nexus that is essential for conflict prevention. We are focusing on Afghanistan with a multidimensional approach of conflict prevention and resolution, recovery, reintegration and humanitarian assistance, through our official development aid program, KazAID. In cooperation with Japan and the United Nations Development Programme, in August 2016 we launched numerous interventions for gender equality in Afghanistan, including providing policy support and capacity development to its Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Kazakhstan pledges its unfailing support to the women and peace and security agenda when it takes its non-permanent seat on the Security Council, and would like to see it kept as a cross-cutting priority item in the Council's deliberations. My country can be counted on to be a strong voice on behalf of women's protection and empowerment.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Zehnder (Liechtenstein): It is my honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and my own country, Liechtenstein.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and its follow-up resolutions, notably resolution 2242 (2015), adopted last year in the wake of the high-level review.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his unwavering support of the women and peace and security agenda during his time in office. We look forward to working with his successor, Mr. António Guterres, to strengthen the women and peace and security agenda. We would like to commend the Security Council for the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, thereby implementing one important aspect of resolution 2242 (2015). We hope that the Council will keep the broader membership informed of the work of the Expert Group and that its work will lead to a stronger presence by women and further peace and security debates and draft resolutions on conflict situations before the Council.

As we can see from the name, peace is at the centre of the women and peace and security agenda. It is not just about making conflict safer for women or including women in post-conflict reconstruction; most important, it is about empowering women in order to prevent conflict.

The need for the United Nations to become more effective in conflict prevention was one of the main outcomes of the three high-level reviews last year and is one of the most important aspects of the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We therefore call on the Security Council, the United Nations and its States Members to place greater emphasis on gender-sensitive conflict prevention and early warning. We see the Secretary-General's Human Rights Up Front Initiative as an important tool for doing so. We also see a strong need for the United Nations to become more effective in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) with regard to peacekeeping missions. Therefore, we support the call for proper resources for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/ Department of Field Support gender advisers.

When we look at positive examples of the inclusion of women in peace processes — for instance, in Colombia — we clearly see that it is indispensable to empower women as agents of peace. We have data that show that women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 per cent. and at least 15 years by 35 per cent. In order to make that possible, we need to eliminate barriers to their participation in peace-related activities. We also need to ensure that women are fully included during the formulation and implementation of early-warning systems and peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts at all levels.

The massive displacement of people in different conflict areas in the past year has once more shown that, when conflicts arise, women and children are among the first victims to suffer, not only in the conflict zone but also when fleeing it. Hence we also need to further strengthen the fight against human trafficking. For that reason, we will jointly organize a side event, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, on countering human trafficking and achieving the universal ratification of the Palermo Protocol, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, on Thursday, 27 October at 11.15 a.m. in Conference Room 9. We

call on all States that have not yet done so to ratify and effectively implement the Palermo Protocol.

Let me conclude by emphasizing once more our full commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and all follow-up resolutions. We continue to be committed to the pledges that we issued last year during the fifteenth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda, and we hope that the impressive amount of pledges issued by other States will also be implemented in due time.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and that made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security. In addition, we fully support the statement to be made by the representative of Italy later today, in the light of our cooperation related to our upcoming split term in the Security Council. Together with Italy, we will continue to place gender at the heart of peace and security issues. We feel proud that resolution 1325 (2000) was adopted by the Council the last time that the Kingdom of the Netherlands was a Council member, in 2000.

I will focus on three issues: first, on the Dutch vision; secondly, the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) in our foreign and security policies; and, thirdly, on the importance of national action plans.

My first point concerns the Dutch vision. Perhaps I will also include a comment on our support for the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. We are a strong supporter of the entire women and peace and security agenda. As the global study has shown us, our focus should be on putting the normative framework we have built together over the past 15 years into practice — into daily reality. We are convinced that the only way to achieve sustainable peace is by the meaningful inclusion of women in conflict prevention, in conflict resolution and in mediation and peace processes.

We promote the engagement of women and men in changing power relationships and gender norms in support of a more inclusive society. We believe that the way forward is to take our best practices and turn them into standard practices. The inclusion of women in peace processes should be the rule rather than the exception. We welcome the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security by the Security Council as a result of resolution 2242 (2015). We commend Spain's efforts to make that resolution a reality. We support the regular participation of civil society in that Group, and we hope the Group will continue to prove its added value to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

That brings me to my second point, that is, the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) in our foreign and security policies. This is a key aim in the Netherlands. I will provide an example. In the joint Spanish-Dutch Gender in Operations training initiatives, we tried to teach diplomats and military personnel about gender and human rights issues. In that way, we tried to contribute to the effectiveness of peace missions and crisis management operations. Another example relates to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. There, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has made senior gender experts available in an effort to address the high numbers of sexual violence cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali.

Our third point focuses on the implementation of our national action plan and on our support for the national action plans of other countries. We published our third national action plan last March. We drafted it in partnership with more than 50 Dutch civil society organizations and knowledge institutions. By trying to coordinate our activities with those of civil society, we aim to make each other stronger and to achieve better, more sustainable results. The Kingdom of the Netherlands encourages other countries to develop their own national action plans, and we will try to support them in doing so. Currently, in our third national action plan we focus on eight countries in Africa and the Middle East and North Africa region.

We support women's participation in peace processes through the support of civil society organizations. For example, together with UN-Women — I am glad to see the head of UN-Women is here — we assist female members of Syrian civil society to unite in the Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy. With that initiative, which dates back a couple of years, we aim to help Syrian women from different backgrounds to pursue a common agenda and to give them a voice during the Syrian peace talks. Some of the women we

supported have joined the Women's Advisory Board of the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura.

The advancement of the role of women is crucial in all our efforts for peace, justice and development. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will remain a partner to promote the rights of women in all those dimensions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Estreme (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to thank the Russian Federation for the invitation to take part in this important open debate on women and peace and security on the sixteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which Argentina supported as a non-permanent member of the Council in 2000.

The merit of resolution 1325 (2000) has been to acknowledge the important role that women play as key actors in peace processes. The international community should join forces to make this role possible. One of the greatest challenges still is the implementation on the ground by all stakeholders of the commitments made in the framework of the United Nations.

Sustaining peace will be achieved only if we increase the participation of women as actors in all stages of the peace process, including in particular in peacekeeping operations. We wish to underscore that 15 per cent of Argentine personnel participating in peacekeeping operations or in special political missions are women, according to the latest data. That is higher than the general average of 4.22 per cent. We will continue to work on deepening that commitment.

Argentina welcomes the establishment of the informal national focal points tetwork for the agenda on women and peace and security. I congratulate the Kingdom of Spain for that initiative. The establishment of that network multiplies the efforts for the full achievement of the human rights of women in countries in conflict, which contributes to the implementation by States of their obligations and commitments.

Argentina fully agrees with the importance that the United Nations attaches to the role of women in preventive diplomacy, at the negotiating table and in post-conflict reconstruction. That perspective is naturally linked with the new concept of sustaining peace, which recognizes the important role to be performed by women.

For Argentina, the gender perspective in the design and implementation of public policies is a priority. That is why the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions is fully embedded in the firm commitment assumed by the Government of my country to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and the defence and protection of women's rights.

Argentina is committed to the meaningful participation of women in decision-making and in all peace processes. That is why we adopted our national plan of action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions as an instrument that integrates all national agencies working in the area of women and peace and security. One of the goals of the national action plan is to increase the participation of women from various spheres — political, social, economic and security — to contribute to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peacemaking.

My country strongly believes that more equitable and egalitarian societies that respect the rights of women are more peaceful societies. With that in mind, strengthening the meaningful role of women in all the phases of peace processes and mainstreaming a gender perspective in peace agreements and in public policies are priorities of our foreign policy in that area. Argentina also encourages the incorporation of a gender perspective into all peace processes involving the United Nations. We consider it fundamental to work with civil society organizations, which should continue to participate in designing and implementing policies related to the topic.

After the adoption of Argentina's national plan and its launch in 2016, Argentina offered to cooperate with Columbia on gender topics in order to contribute to the country's peace process. We are convinced that working towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will have a real impact on peacebuilding in various parts of the world, which is why my country has promoted its policies regarding women's access to justice and the fight against impunity. It has done that, to give just one example, by participating in the Justice Rapid Response initiative; my country is a member of the initiative's governing body and has nominated experts to be included in its roster.

In many cases, the violation of women's human rights and the assaults against the sexual integrity of women and girls in situations of conflict, as well as the abduction of women and girls, with the goal of

exploiting them for work, sexual slavery and trafficking, are committed by members of rebel or terrorist groups, as well as by members of armed forces or security forces. In some cases, such crimes are even committed by members of participating peacekeeping operations.

We need to work in favour of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and to strengthen measures aimed at preventing cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in peacekeeping operations, in line with the Organization's zero-tolerance policy. We should also implement the resolution with regard to its military, police and civilian components, so as to move from a culture of impunity to a culture of prevention. Such measures would have a real impact on peacebuilding in various parts of the world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand): It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the 10 member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is made up of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand.

ASEAN wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2016/822), as well as the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the representative of civil society for their informative briefings. We also wish to thank the Russian Federation for convening this timely debate, which comes one year after the conclusion of the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in which Member States reiterated their commitment to effectively implementing that milestone resolution.

It is encouraging to witness the growing awareness around the world of the indispensable role of women and their perspectives in the areas of peace and security. Nevertheless, as rightly pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, the subject of women and peace and security is not being sufficiently utilized to prevent conflict, and much remains to be done at all levels. In that regard, ASEAN would like to update Security Council members on the progress made in our region as a result of resolution 1325 (2000), confirming its validity.

As ASEAN implements the early stages of its post-2015 Community, it continues to underscore the increasing role and participation of women in all three ASEAN pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Women-related issues and the gender perspective are addressed through several key ASEAN mechanisms and frameworks. Among others, allow me to mention the ASEAN Committee on Women and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children. The ASEAN Declaration on the Advancement of Women was adopted to promote the equitable and effective participation of women, wherever possible, in all fields, as well as to integrate the specific concerns of women and their roles as active agents in peace, security and development into member States' national plans. The adoption of the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children provides another concrete example that reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to tackle violence against women in all forms. During the ASEAN Summit in Vientiane in September, ASEAN leaders tasked the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children to continue its efforts in implementing the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on that issue.

At the second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women, held in Manila on 23 October 2015, all ASEAN sectoral bodies and member States were encouraged to promote gender responsiveness and integrate gender mainstreaming into their respective activities and initiatives. The Meeting also adopted the 2016-2020 Work Plan of the ASEAN Committee on Women, which focuses on six key priority areas: the promotion of women in leadership, non-gender stereotyping and social norm change, gender mainstreaming across the three pillars, the elimination of violence against women, the economic empowerment of women and the protection and empowerment of women in vulnerable situations. Those priorities are comprehensive and very much in line with the key aspects of resolution 1325 (2000).

ASEAN recognizes the constructive role and valuable contributions of female peacekeepers, and we therefore support the call for an increase in their number. Several ASEAN members have already provided,

and will continue to provide, well-trained female peacekeepers in response to that call. We strongly hope that ASEAN's holistic approach to addressing women-related issues will be complementary to global endeavours to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

Please allow me to say a few words in my national capacity. Like other Member States, the Kingdom of Thailand attaches great importance to the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which requires collective international efforts. We therefore welcome the establishment of the women, peace and security national focal points network, proposed by Spain and the United Kingdom, as an important step towards that goal, and we have gladly joined the initiative.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the need for all of us to ensure the universal implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Thailand, together with other ASEAN members, stands ready to work closely with the international community in that respect.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): This morning we heard from Ms. Rita Lopidia that women in conflict situations lacked protection, lived in fear, were at risk of being raped on a daily basis, had almost no access to justice, were economically disadvantaged and lived with limited freedoms. I therefore believe that women have to transition from being victims to establishing themselves as active agents for peace and security. We, together with the United Nations system, must help them to that end.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to concentrate today on the need for cooperation. The issues that form part of the women and peace and security agenda are interrelated and interconnected, and must be addressed as such. For effective implementation of the women and peace and security framework at the national and international levels, close and comprehensive cooperation is needed among institutions and Governments. Hungary welcomes the launching of the women, peace and security national focal points network, and we hope that it will effectively assist Member States to implement the women and peace and security agenda. Moreover, Hungary has already engaged in an interministerial cooperation process to review how its national contribution could be improved and has established a women and peace and security national focal point within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In order to successfully implement a holistic approach, we need to use all the tools available within the United Nations system. We need actionable recommendations on women and peace and security matters, not only from the Security Council but also from all treaty bodies. In addition, we should find ways to use the Universal Periodic Review to accelerate its further implementation.

Hungary strongly supports the efforts to increase the meaningful participation of women at all stages and levels of peace processes. We also encourage Member States to support women's engagement in local, national and global decision-making structures, including the participation of women in electoral processes. We have heard today strong examples. They should inspire all of us because they are examples for all of us and through those examples we could create mechanisms that enable the participation of women in conflict resolution, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. In this period, for example, Hungary financed a gender-based training workshop in Kenya within the framework of its international development cooperation strategy.

Women play a key role in areas affected by conflict in ensuring the livelihoods of their families in the midst of chaos, and are particularly active in community-building and peace movements at the grass-roots level. However, such women-led organizations are noticeably fewer, or even absent, from formal peace processes. We hope to see recognized the important role that civil society and women-led organizations play in peace processes. Similarly, the increased participation of women in peacekeeping missions is of the utmost importance. Their contribution could be particularly useful in designing and implementing strategies for the protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance.

The Security Council should also continue to promote women's participation and gender mainstreaming as part of making peacebuilding processes and post-conflict recovery efforts more inclusive. We do not only want women to be present in decision-making at the negotiation table because it is just; we want them to be included because history has

shown so many times that the participation of women is vital to peacebuilding and the creation of peaceful and inclusive societies.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Galbavý (Slovakia): We thank the Russian presidency for convening this open debate. We appreciate the leadership and commitment of the Security Council to gender equality in international peace and security. We especially commend Spain and the United Kingdom for their efforts in establishing and co-chairing the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. I would also like to commend the UN-Women and its partners for their numerous ongoing initiatives related to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Slovakia welcomes the establishment in September of the women and peace and security national focal point network, which will periodically share and exchange lessons learned and best practices.

While aligning ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, I wish briefly to highlight a few additional points in my national capacity.

As pointed out by speakers before me, the challenge we face in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda is not a lack of a normative framework, but rather the significant gaps that exist when it comes to its implementation. That is a fact despite the overwhelming evidence of the contributions women bring to prevention and peacebuilding efforts as agents of change. Resolution 2242 (2015) provides a critical tool for the international community to make tangible progress towards gender equality and peace.

The equal participation and involvement of women in peace and security is a cross-cutting issue and gender expertise is needed in all areas, including security sector reform. The participation and involvement of women is key to operational effectiveness, local ownership and strengthened oversight. Increasing the recruitment of female staff, preventing human rights violations and collaborating with women's organizations contribute to creating an efficient, accountable and participatory security sector that responds to the special needs of both women and men.

Slovakia underlines the importance of the effective implementation of resolution 2151 (2014), on security sector reform. That landmark resolution underscores the importance of the equal and effective participation and full involvement of women in all stages of security sector reform. It underlines the vital role of women in preventing conflict and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, as well as in strengthening civilian protection measures in security services during the reconstruction process. It suggests including more women in training for security personnel and calls for effective vetting processes in order to exclude perpetrators of sexual violence from the security sector.

In conclusion, we underline our continued support for the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations and the approach of zero impunity for all military, police and civilian personnel of the United Nations in the area of prevention and protection against sexual violence in peacekeeping operations. We support resolution 2272 (2016), which requested that the Secretary-General assess whether a Member State had taken steps to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, held the perpetrators accountable and informed him about the progress of investigations when determining its participation in peacekeeping operations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): First of all, I would like to thank the Russian Federation for convening this important and timely meeting.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the members of the Human Security Network, a cross-regional network made up of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Thailand, South Africa as an observer State and my own country, Slovenia. The Human Security Network is an informal group of States that promotes the integration of a human security approach into policies and programmes at international, regional and national levels.

We welcome this important and timely debate. One year ago here in the Chamber we reaffirmed commitments to further realize the women and peace and security agenda (see S/PV.7533). With the adoption of the resolution 2242 (2015), the Council once again reaffirmed the importance of the agenda.

A crucial element of the women and peace and security agenda is the involvement of women in peace-related activities. We see today that more women are involved in peace talks and that more peace

agreements include provisions that relate to the specific needs of women and girls, including supporting their human rights, as the 2016 report (S/2016/822) of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security highlights. The Network supports the Secretary-General's call that initiatives to promote women's participation and inclusive consultations should become standard practice in the mediation of peace agreements. Their important role as active agents of change in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security in all phases of conflict resolution and peacebuilding is invaluable not just for women, but for society as a whole.

Despite the progress made and the recognition of the facts that the women and peace and security agenda is critical for conflict prevention and effective responses to complex crises and that women are important agents of progress in peace talks, they remain unequally involved in those processes, particularly in political dimensions. The positive role that women play in all stages of conflict prevention and resolution is often underestimated or even ignored, instead of being recognized and utilized.

The Network calls upon Member States, United Nations entities and regional and subregional organizations to support Member States in their efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and all subsequent resolutions, including resolution 2242 (2015). We call for greater recognition of, and support for, women's participation in all stages of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconciliation processes so that peace agreements can be more attainable and sustainable.

The Network expresses its profound concern regarding the impact of the unprecedented wave of forced displacement on women and girls. In that regard, it calls for the engagement of women in the design and implementation of humanitarian action and early recovery, while taking into account the increasing needs for sustained donor support to host countries and communities to appropriately support women's self-reliance and resilience, ensure a strengthened humanitarian-developed nexus and improve coordination with peacebuilding and human rights efforts.

We also call for greater efforts to promote and respect the human rights of women and girls as, well as to strengthen all efforts to effectively address gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence. For too long, sexual violence against women and girls has been committed on a systematic and widespread scale as a crime against humanity, or even a weapon of war. We stress the importance of fighting impunity and ensuring accountability under national or international jurisdictions. The perpetrators of such crimes must be brought to justice.

As a group of countries promoting human security, the Human Security Network would like to emphasize that the personal security of women is essential for human security. Women's empowerment and participation are the cornerstones of any prevention and protection response.

The economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls reduces their vulnerability and enhances their ability to protect themselves and exercise their rights. In that regard, we need to ensure that women and girls' interests are fully respected and systematically integrated in the context of peace processes. Strategies for the effective integration of gender perspectives should therefore be pursued to promote women's empowerment and participation.

Allow me now to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the observer European Union and that made by the representative of Liechtenstein on behalf of Slovenia, Austria and Switzerland.

As was reiterated many times after last year's review, it is high time to begin showing tangible results and bring the women and peace and security agenda closer to women who can make a difference. All stakeholders have to cooperate and harmonize their efforts in order to avoid duplication, on the one hand, and gaps, on the other. In that regard, Slovenia welcomes the establishment of the women and peace and security focal points network and the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security.

Slovenia pays particular attention to awareness-raising and training on women and peace and security, including within our national armed forces. It is important that everyone involved in peace and security processes be aware of the roles women play and the advantages they bring to peace-related activites. The experience of the Slovenian armed gorces is that higher numbers of women in crisis management processes and peacekeeping missions ensure better quality mediation, in particular in the context of local communities and

especially among socially underprivileged groups in crisis areas, including local women. Raising awareness and education on the comprehensive implementation of the women and peace and security agenda has been integrated into different educational programmes and has become an important component of training systems in the Slovenian armed forces.

To conclude, Slovenia agrees with the report of the Secretary-General that prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings must remain a continued effort. We all must strive to remove obstacles to women's participation, in particular in efforts to prevent and combat sexual- and gender-based violence and harmful practices that impede women from enjoying human rights on an equal footing with other members of society.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mrs. Kassangana-Jakubowska (Poland): Let me begin by thanking the Russian delegation for organizing this timely debate.

Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like to take this opportunity to share with the Security Council some additional remarks in my national capacity.

In the year after the comprehensive reviews of United Nations peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), concrete commitments were made to advance women's rights, in particular in terms of their political participation and leadership in conflict and post-conflict situations. Yet there is still a lot to be done to strengthen women's roles in conflict prevention, peace negotiations and peacemaking processes.

Since it is a primary responsibility of Member States to implement the commitments and obligations under the women and peace and security agenda into national policies and legislative framework, let me reassure the Council that Poland remains committed to the promotion of women's meaningful participation in all stages of peace processes in its three dimensions — the political, institutional and financial.

As far as political engagement is concerned, Poland has been participating in Security Council open debates on women and peace and security and we have co-sponsored many of the resolutions related to the issue, including the most recent resolution 2242 (2015), which provides a clear road map for the implementation of the women and peace and security framework. We commend the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and we are convinced that its establishment will contribute to further enhance coordination for gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions.

In terms of our institutional involvement, we have appointed a focal point on women and peace and security. Poland participated in the founding meeting of the women and peace and security focal points network, which took place here in New York. We commend Spain, Canada, Chile, Japan, Namibia and the United Arab Emirates for their timely initiative. We look forward to upcoming meetings of the network, which we are sure will provide a platform for the exchange of good practices in the area of women and peace and security. We are also working on our national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which will enable us to better comply with our obligations under the women and peace and security agenda.

Last but not least, we have also decided to earmark a minimum of 15 per cent of all our future funding for the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund for gender responsive policies, including those addressing the special needs of women in post-conflict situations. We believe that a predictable funding mechanism is vital for the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Apart from Member States responsibilities to advance the women and peace and security agenda, we must also acknowledge the role of the civil society organizations, including women human rights defenders and women-led non-governmental organizations, as they play a crucial role at all levels of conflict prevention, decision-making, mediation and post-conflict resolution. We are convinced that close collaboration between Governments and civil society can significantly scale up the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Let me conclude by highlighting the fact that women are among the most vulnerable victims in war and conflict situations, yet they are also often the ones that trigger peace mechanisms. As the examples from Liberia or Colombia show, women's movements are major agents of change in contributing to international peace and security. It is our moral obligation to

enable their full participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

Mr. Herrmann: The Holy See is pleased that the Russian Federation presidency has chosen this topic for an open debate in the Security Council, thereby bringing it to the attention of the international community. The Holy See has long advocated for increased involvement by women in making, maintaining and building peace. Therefore it appreciates the initiatives promoted by the Security Council and Governments to raise awareness and arrive at a fuller recognition of the vital role of women in preventing the outbreak of war through mediation and preventive diplomacy, in reconciling, rehabilitating and rebuilding societies in post-war situations and in avoiding relapses into armed conflict. Women can, and should, play much greater roles in all of those processes. Their special capacities to bring order out of chaos, community out of division and peace out of conflict, and their special gifts in educating people to be more receptive and sensitive to the needs of others, are essential to our goal to spare our world from the scourges of war and to help to heal the wounds of earlier and current violent conflicts.

In order to harness the special capacities of women in peace and security, however, an international effort should be made to enable them to succeed, something that will be difficult to achieve if women still represent a disproportionate number of the world's disadvantaged. The lack of access for women and girls to education, particularly quality education, must be addressed. Sad to say, as Pope Francis pointed out in his 25 September 2015 address to the General Assembly (see A/70/PV.3), not everywhere are girls and women given full access to education. Most of the time that results in their being condemned to a second-class role within society and in their being given no possibility of being heard. Education is the great enabler for women, making it possible for them to be able to contribute fully to the promotion and consolidation of peace and harmony, not only in the family but also in local communities and in the entire world.

The Catholic Church has long placed great emphasis on the absolute necessity of giving young women and girls access to education. Today young women and girls constitute the majority of students in many of the more than 100,000 schools that the Catholic Church maintains worldwide, from kindergartens to universities, especially in regions where women and girls still suffer discrimination. They learn the skills needed to become well-trained educators and professionals, which will help them to contribute to a secure and safe society. The priority of ensuring a quality education for girls and women is essential if we hope that they will transmit to boys and men the necessary values to desist from violence and conflict. The role and influence of mothers are vital in the education of children and youth in the values of peace, mutual respect, reconciliation and healing. The peacemaking role of the mother in the family is of the essence, not merely for a peaceful and secure home but also for a peaceful and inclusive safe society.

Setting up women to succeed in using their talents for making, maintaining and building peace also requires combating poverty and ensuring access to other fundamental resources. In both urban and rural areas, it is far more common for women to lack access to basic services, including health care and social protections. In vast areas of the world, the lack of a consistent and nutritious food programme, clean water and sanitation services, as well as the lack of employment opportunities and decent pay, continue to undermine women's ability to play their role in the life of their families and society as a whole.

Helping women to bring healing to the world by addressing the causes and consequences of war and violence also means protecting them in that vital mission. The nearly 50 conflicts raging in various parts of the world today call upon us to concentrate our efforts on the plight of women and girls in violent situations. Women who have fallen victim to violence must be helped to overcome the stigma and shame to which they are being subjected in some societies, and they must be allowed to seek justice. It is so much more difficult for women to sustain their families and care for their family members who have been maimed by violence if their own wounds are not being treated and the injustices that they have suffered are not being remedied. With so much money available for weapons, cannot the world spare resources to compensate for the loss of life and limb in the families and homes of those innocent victims, so as to help them overcome the ravages of conflict and enable them to become peacemakers?

The fact that women suffer disproportionately from conflicts and wars, which they have not caused, creates

a false impression that women are solely victims and not also peacemakers. It is high time — indeed, high time is long past — that that flawed image be laid to rest. The one sure way of achieving that is to harness to the fullest extent the active role of women in all phases of conflict prevention, mediation, conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding. Without the input and specific skills of women, a deep understanding of the causes of conflicts and of the most effective solutions to end them and to build peace may never be fully attained.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Buffin (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium would like to thank the Russian delegation for convening today's debate. We would also like to thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, and Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of EVE Organization for Women Development, for their briefings and their presence today.

Belgium fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following observations in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to Ms. Fatoumata Siré Diakité, late President and founder of the Association for the Progress and Defence of Women in Mali, who passed away on 14 October. She was recognized as Woman of the Year in Mali in 2015 and was honoured by numerous awards. Ms. Diakité opened the way for Mali to recognize the rights of women in every domain — the fight against female genital mutilation, child marriages and gender-based violence. That woman serves as a model who can inspire all of us.

An open debate (see S/PV.7533)was held a year ago on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). It was the most well-attended debate in the history of the Security Council, with 113 speakers over a two-day period. The vast majority of Member States co-sponsored resolution 2242 (2015). That overwhelming participation clearly shows the importance that Member States attach to the women and peace and security agenda. It is indeed a matter that concerns us all. Our priority can now be summed up in three words: implementation, implementation, implementation.

Today's debate focuses quite rightly on progress achieved in implementing the commitments undertaken by Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations in the high-level review of women and peace and security in October 2015. Since the outset, Belgium has strongly endorsed the women and peace and security agenda. Currently, at the national level, all Belgian stakeholders are focusing their efforts on implementing our second national plan of action for the agenda. We are also in the process of drafting our third plan, in which we will give particular attention to women's key role in preventing violent extremism. We are ready to share our experience in this field and welcome with interest all the experiences and best practices that our partners are willing to share.

At the international level, Belgium works closely with multilateral organizations, such as UN-Women, to strengthen national capacities for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. In our current National Action Plan, we have identified three priority partner countries — Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali — to which we provide financial assistance for the financing of specific projects. In Mali, together with UN-Women, Belgium co-chairs the donor group devoted to the issue of gender equality and has contributed €1.5 million to the programme to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the peace process. In Afghanistan, Belgium has supported the UN-Women country programme with a contribution of €3 million. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium has contributed €2 million for the implementation of the UN-Women programme entitled "Support for the law and the participation of Congolese women in the context of resolution 1325 (2000)".

At the invitation of Spain, Belgium became a founding member of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network. We thank that country for its initiative in that regard. We also wish to salute Spain and the United Kingdom as co-chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security for their invaluable contributions, and we are pleased to see that group of experts pursue its work on a consolidated basis.

The Russian presidency has also asked us to think about next steps in promoting the women and peace and security agenda. I would like to make three very concrete recommendations:

First, we urgently need to increase the active participation and representation of women in all political, justice and peace processes. Indeed, many studies have shown that women's participation increases the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, the credibility and quality of peacekeeping operations, the speed of economic recovery in post-conflict situations and the sustainability of peace agreements.

Secondly, in the fight against sexual violence in conflict situations, the fight against impunity is of paramount importance. This year is the tenth anniversary of the Brussels Call to Action to Address Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond. In the outcome document of that international symposium, held in June 2006, participants committed themselves to

> "intensify international, regional and national efforts to end impunity for perpetrators by strengthening the legal and judicial systems and by enacting and enforcing legislation, and provide national justice systems with the necessary resources to prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence".

Belgium supports that appeal with determination and actively contributes to current efforts to pursue the so-called Islamic State — also known as Da'esh — for its crimes, especially those committed against the Yazidi community.

Thirdly and finally, the women and peace and security agenda should be integrated into the thematic work of the Security Council on counter-terrorism, even when it comes to countries where groups such as Boko Haram or the so-called Islamic State are active, and into country strategies in line with commitments made in resolution 2242 (2015).

In conclusion, I would like to invite all participants to attend an event tomorrow morning entitled "From Local Action to Global Change — Bottom-up Approaches on Resolution 1325 (2000) from Iraq, Libya and Kenya", co-chaired by Costa Rica and my country, Belgium, and organized by the WO=MEN, Women Peacemakers Programme, PAX and Cordaid associations. It will provide an important opportunity to illustrate the important role of civil society in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*) Costa Rica congratulates the Council presidency for convening today's debate to analyse the progress in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda a year after the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). That resolution represented a major change in the inclusion of women in the context of peace and security, promoting their direct involvement and their active and meaningful participation in addressing the disproportionate impact of conflict and violence on women. In that way, they are recognized not as victims but as agents of change, where empowered women, on an equal footing with their male counterparts, are the basis of peaceful and inclusive societies. We welcome the briefing by the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Secretary-General's statement.

Although the positive effect that women generate in negotiations in peace, conflict resolution, post-conflict and humanitarian assistance processes has been recognized, there is still resistance to the adequate and meaningful integration of women in those processes. That resistance lies partly in the high cost of political will and partly in structural obstacles, as evidenced in the large gap that persists in the presence of women in leadership positions in entities dedicated to peace and security activities. For example, during 2015, fewer than 10 per cent of the management positions in peace and security activities at the United Nations were held by women.

Gender balance in senior-level management is desirable and necessary. Only 22 per cent of the Under-Secretaries-General today are women. It is clear therefore that previous commitments to gender parity have failed the compliance test. We therefore call on the permanent and elected members of the Security Council to support without restrictions the commitment made by the Secretary-General-elect to achieve gender parity at all levels of appointment at the United Nations, for which he will present and implement a road map with clear benchmarks and deadlines, starting with the selection of senior staff.

Integrating the women and peace and security agenda throughout the work of the Security Council should be a priority. It is noteworthy that, in response to the recommendations outlined in resolution 2242 (2015), several initiatives have been launched, for example, the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. They have not ignored the need

to fight terrorism in order thereby to improve the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in every context.

Similarly, we consider it valuable to have gender perspectives in various areas of action within peace and security processes, such as in commissions of inquiry, mediation processes and mechanisms of transitional justice. Building partnerships with such organizations as UN-Women, so as to benefit from their experience and views on those various efforts, is another way to integrate a gender perspective into all aspects of the peace and security agenda. Let us welcome also the systematic inclusion of women-protection advisers in the strategic planning processes for political missions and peacekeeping operations, the training of teams of experts on the rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, as well as working with associations supported by UN-Women, such as Justice Rapid Response, which has facilitated the recruitment and inclusion of female gender advisers in commissions of inquiry on cases relating to sexual violence and abuse crimes.

The incidence and widespread use of sexual violence as a tactic of terror and a weapon of war are heartbreaking. We urge that such acts be sanctioned with firm penalties and that impunity be completely eliminated, including, when necessary, through referral of cases to the International Criminal Court. We consider such acts of violence to constitute crimes against humanity, and we maintain a position of zero tolerance when it comes to cases of sexual violence and abuse.

The fundamental point remains to get women into leadership positions, where they can be involved in decisions and provide a gender perspective at all levels of participation and in all activities related to the peace and security agenda. That should also be linked with efforts to protect human rights and development. We must not forget that resolution 1325 (2000) was conceived as a human rights mandate.

Ensuring equal opportunities and the economic, social and political empowerment of women is an imperative, if women and girls are to assume, with all the tools they need, the desired transcendental and transformative role in their communities during and following conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Mawe (Ireland): I thank you, Sir, for convening this debate. It provides us with an opportunity to take stock of our progress and the challenges that face us in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. There is indeed much to review: eight resolutions, 63 national action plans and initiatives at the international, regional and national levels, which are too numerous to list. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/822) shows that the women and peace and security agenda has fundamentally changed the way in which we approach issues of peace and security.

Ireland fully supports the statement made by the observer of the European Union, and, in my national capacity, I would like to focus on how the implementation and mainstreaming of the women and peace and security agenda have led and can further lead to paradigm shifts in four crucial areas. The first area is migration. Last month, we adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1). It confirms that our response to refugee and migrant flows must go beyond border security, camps and asylum processes. It highlights the particular risks faced by women migrants and women refugees, including sexual violence and trafficking. Moreover, it recognizes the role of women in peace and reconciliation processes and in developing solutions. Those are intrinsic elements of the women and peace and security agenda. Their inclusion in the Declaration is a major achievement. We urge Member States and other partners, including the Security Council, to maintain momentum by ensuring that women and peace and security priorities are now mainstreamed through our collective response to this global phenomenon.

The second is conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. We are moving closer to plugging what former Secretary-General Kofi Annan termed the "gaping hole" in the United Nations machinery for sustaining peace. Much more remains to be done. Resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262, adopted in April, provide us with a robust policy framework for enhancing the United Nations work in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The women and peace and security agenda, however, provides us with a tool for implementation. We have plainly seen that when women participate in society and their voices are heard, there is a higher chance of achieving and sustaining peace or preventing the outbreak of conflict in the first instance.

The Peacebuilding Fund has met the Secretary-General's gender target of 15 per cent and is pioneering the mainstreaming of the women and peace and security agenda in peacebuilding. Last month, Ireland pledged more than $3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund over three years. We urge the States Members of the United Nations and the Security Council to support the work of the Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission as part of a wider move to harness the women and peace and security agenda as a driver of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Thirdly, women-and-peace-and-security mainstreaming has also driven changes in mediation and peace processes. A formula for lasting peace cannot be reached by excluding half of society. That has been shown by the Global Study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and is also rooted in fundamental logic.

Thankfully, we are advancing in that regard. Since 2012, all United Nations mediation-support teams have included women. We have best practices, including Colombia, from which to draw. Nevertheless, the report of the Secretary-General shows mixed progress regarding the inclusion of women in peace processes. Through our experience of reconciliation on our own island and our consistent engagement with the United Nations Mediation Support Unit, Ireland can attest to the crucial need for the participation of women in mediation and peace processes. We call for the redoubling of efforts on the part of special envoys and representatives, with support from Security Council member States and regional partners, so as to ensure that next year's report of the Secretary-General can point to clear progress in that regard.

Fourthly, the women and peace and security agenda is leading to a sea change in the peacekeeping paradigm. For Ireland, we do not have to look any further than home to see that. Resolution 1325 (2000) was transposed directly by our defence forces into an action plan for women and peace and security. That plan supports our national action plan on women and peace and security, which is now in its second phase. It means that women and peace and security priorities are included in almost every stage of Ireland's overseas engagements, from pre-deployment training to the planning, execution and reporting of operations. Initiatives to target women in our 2016 army recruitment drives have been held up as best practices. We are also pleased to announce that the recent deployment of Lieutenant Colonel Mary Carroll to head the Irish contingent of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force represents the first woman commander of a mixed gender infantry unit in a United Nations mission.

Those are only four areas in which the women and peace and security agenda has catalysed change and can continue to do so. There are many more, including disarmament, international criminal justice and the prevention and countering of violent extremism. It would be remiss not to focus lastly and briefly on those of us charged with living the changes that we have made.

First, with regard to the United Nations system — more work is needed to advance the Global Study's recommendation that a gender perspective should be mainstreamed throughout the United Nations response to conflict emergencies. The recent adoption by the Peacebuilding Commission of a gender strategy is an example of a best practice that we can all learn from.

Secondly, with regard to regional and subregional organizations, in May, Ireland was pleased to host the inaugural workshop on the regional acceleration of resolution 1325 (2000). It brought together regional organizations working on peacekeeping. Such work must form part of a larger effort to support and learn from women and peace and security initiatives at the regional level.

Thirdly, with regard to Member States, 63 national action plans mean 63 opportunities to identify lessons learned, which could serve to spark new initiatives. We look forward to participating actively in the national women and peace and security focal points network launched by Spain in September.

Finally and crucially, with regard to civil society organizations, those on the front lines of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda are often those most in need of support. Ireland has contributed almost $500,000 to the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action since its launch last February, and we encourage other donors to support this civil society organization-driven fund. When we speak at next year's debate, we hope to be able to point to even greater progress within the frameworks of peace and security, all with the women and peace and security agenda at the core.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Mr. Jinga (Romania): I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing today's open debate on women and peace and security, one year after the high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women for their tireless efforts in promoting the role of women in peacebuilding and the gender dimension of conflict resolution.

Last year, resolution 2242 (2015) recognized the need for greater integration of the agenda of resolution 1325 (2000) into the Council's work. In that regard, Romania welcomes the creation of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. Data show that when women are included in peace processes, there is a 20 per cent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least two years and a 35 per cent increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years. The building of peace is a continuous process that requires broad popular support and the participation of all layers of society. Every generation has to rediscover the value of peace and build on previous generations' achievements in preserving it. Peace is built every day by teachers in schools, by youth on sports fields and by employees in their workplaces.

Resolution 1325 (2000) contributed to adapting the United Nations peacebuilding architecture to new challenges. Consequently, at the end of an extensive intergovernmental process, a new concept — that of sustaining peace — was endorsed by the States Members of the United Nations and formalized by two identical resolutions adopted on 27 April 2016: Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262. Sustaining peace is understood both as a goal and as a process related to the prevention, stabilization and post-conflict construction and development. Evidence has shown the nexus between gender mainstreaming, sustaining peace and civic engagement. For example, seven out of 10 peace agreements signed in 2015 included gender-specific provisions. Women are now deployed in all areas of peacekeeping and special political missions as part of the missions' police, military and civilian personnel. More security personnel have been trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

The Romanian Ministry of Defence has adopted a national plan applicable until 2024, aimed at implementing the women and peace and security agenda. It promotes fair and balanced access for men and women, whether military or civilian personnel, to operational, executive and leadership posts at all hierarchical levels. The selection of candidates is a process evaluating professional skills, with no gender specification. A focal point on gender is appointed within all Romanian military units. As a result, we have women who have reached the rank of General, and there is an increased number of military female staff participating in international missions. Gender equality, tolerance, non-discrimination and interdiction of sexual harassment and gender violence are reflected in all military education programmes in Romania. Romania continues to deploy mixed-gender teams, especially within the civil and military cooperation units in Afghanistan. Currently, 15 per cent of Romanian police officers deployed in United Nations missions are women.

Finally, as one participant in the consultations held during the preparation of the global study said, women and peace and security is an agenda that speaks about preventing war, not about making war safer for women. Therefore, we praise women's leadership and the critical role women play in preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, an informal network of 51 interested Member States chaired by Canada, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations. One year after the high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Group reaffirms its unwavering support for the Council's work on this critical agenda.

The Group welcomes the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security as an outcome of resolution 2242 (2015) to facilitate a more systematic approach to the agenda in the Council and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts. We strongly encourage the Informal Expert Group to include in its work the regular participation of civil society and to share its conclusions with all Member States.

Recognizing that Member States and regional organizations are influential actors in the implementation of all women and peace and security resolutions, the Group emphasizes the importance of national action plans, with appropriate resourcing, monitoring and civil-society consultation. The Group welcomes the establishment, led by Spain, of the women and peace and security national focal point network, which will periodically share and exchange lessons learned and best practices. The Group also welcomes the establishment of the Global Acceleration Instrument as one avenue to attract resources, coordinate responses and accelerate implementation.

Noting the impact of inclusion, especially women's participation, on the durability of peace agreements, the Group stresses the importance of the meaningful participation of women at all stages of the peace processes and the elimination of barriers to their participation, as well as the mainstreaming of gender-specific language and the human rights of women in peace agreements. The Group also encourages the United Nations to include the women and peace and security agenda more systematically in its work on preventive diplomacy.

The Group emphasizes the indispensable role played by women in United Nations peacekeeping and underscores that their participation at all levels is key to the operational effectiveness of missions. The Group calls for the increased participation of women in peacekeeping at all levels, the integration of the human rights of women and a gender perspective into all aspects of peacekeeping, and the timely and appropriate resourcing and staffing of gender advisers at United Nations Headquarters and missions. The Group also calls for the full implementation of the commitments made at the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial held in London in September.

The Group expresses its profound concern regarding the impact of the unprecedented wave of forced displacement on women and girls. In this regard, it calls for the more systematic engagement of women and girls in the design and implementation of humanitarian assistance and early recovery programmes. In line with humanitarian principles, the Group further calls for the promotion of access to medical, legal, psychosocial and livelihood services to displaced persons, including sexual and reproductive health services, without discrimination.

The Group condemns in the strongest terms incidents of sexual violence in all conflicts, including the ongoing trafficking, rape and enslavement of Yazidi women and girls by Da'esh; the abduction and sexual abuse of women and schoolgirls by Boko Haram in Nigeria; and the ongoing use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, among many others. Such gender-based violence is a grave violation and abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law, and remains a barrier to the full achievement of gender equality, peace and development. We call for accountability for such crimes, including through the implementation of the international protocol on the documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict, as well as greater support for survivors. Furthermore, the Group deplores the fact that the stigmatization of survivors exacerbates their marginalization and is a barrier to their full recovery.

Lastly, the Group of Friends condemns in the strongest terms cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations, and it reaffirms its full commitment to the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations with regard to all civilian, military and police personnel. We call on the international community to redouble its efforts to combat this scourge and welcome the recent efforts undertaken by Member States and the Secretary-General to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, to pursue accountability for perpetrators and to provide support to victims. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2272 (2016), the appointment of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and the establishment of the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

(*spoke in French*)

Allow me to make some additional points as Canada's representative.

First, Canada supports the important work of UN-Women and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Secondly, the advancement of gender equality and the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls are critical to all peace and development goals.

Thirdly, the United Nations and its Member States must do more to integrate women and peace and security issues in peace operations by ending sexual

violence and abuse by peacekeeping personnel and by devoting more resources to gender adviser positions.

Fourthly, we must take a broad approach to ending gender inequality by involving men and boys as well as women and girls in the joint creation of a truly inclusive space.

And finally, Canada is implementing this agenda domestically by renewing our action plan on women and peace and security; ensuring the meaningful participation of women in our peace operations; incorporating a gender-based approach into military operations; and providing support to survivors of sexual violence in conflict zones.

Canada remains ready to work together to further advance the important resolution 1325 (2000) agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): On behalf of Estonia, I would like to thank all speakers today; a special thank you goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for this year's report on women and peace and security (S/2016/822).

We align ourselves with the statement of the European Union and of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security, and we reiterate our commitment to and support for protecting women's and girls' rights globally.

The fundamental lesson that this report teaches us is the sheer level of detail that is required in order to address the issue of women's rights violations, so that no one gets left behind. Every topic diverges into a number of smaller issues; for example, violence against women breaks down into matters such as stereotyping, conflict-zone violence, sexual violence and extremist violence. If we focus only on sexual violence, for instance, we start looking at questions of identification, prevention, detection and victim support. From victim support, we derive different types of services, whether it be creating awareness, promoting access or supplying psychological and physical specialists. This overall process is a fragile transition that begins with the facts, figures and estimates we read on paper, and narrows down to the actual care and support each and every woman receives personally. Every detail in that transition will correspond to a certain woman living in the world. When a detail is forgotten, a woman may be, too. We, as Member States, must do two things for the benefit of every single woman in need of help — invest and collaborate more.

Estonia invests both domestically and globally in achieving gender equality. At home, we have adopted national action plans and development strategies aimed at tackling issues such as stereotyping, violence and inaccessible victim-support services. Mrs. Kaljulaid, our newly elected President, is hopefully a testament to the fact that Estonians can reach the highest ranks regardless of their gender. However, we continue to encourage women's participation in all spheres of society, governance and industry. In the military, for example, where the majority of participants are male, we hope to triple the number of females in the next two years.

Internationally, we remain committed to promoting the potential of information and communications technologies (ICT) and innovation for helping to protect women's and girls' rights. ICT can give access to voting and education, detect and collect data, offer victim-support services, and function as a platform for free speech and global communication. The list goes on. We must establish more ICT mechanisms with that goal in mind. In that regard, I would like to commend UN-Women for collaborating with us in the area of ICT, as well as for incorporating technology into their own programmes and supporting a number of related measures.

That brings me to the subject of collaboration. While intergovernmental cooperation is extremely significant, everyone should be heard from, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society have the ability to provide new insights and data that might otherwise be missed. There can be no doubt that that helps our joint efforts to ensure that every detail is accounted for and that no one is left behind. I would therefore like to stress that representatives of civil society and NGOs should be given larger platforms and more access to United Nations meetings and conferences.

As the Secretary-General's report noted, last year saw a record number of speakers — 113 — in the debate on this subject (see S/PV.7533). That is no surprise, since we believe that everyone should have a say in this global challenge, whether reflective or predictive, factual or emotional, pessimistic or positive. It is only when we hear every detail that we can try to solve every problem.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women for her valuable contribution.

The adoption on 31 October 2000 of resolution 1325 (2000) remains a significant milestone in the progressive march for women' rights and equality the world over, since it represents new progress in our efforts to ensure for women a significant and necessary voice in the area of peace and security.

South Africa strongly believes in the involvement and empowerment of women in every aspect of peace, security and development. That finds a robust reflection in the fact that democratic South Africa has one of the largest contingents of women peacekeepers deployed throughout the African continent. Women's participation in peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts is recognized as a contributing factor to the effectiveness and long-term success of United Nations deployments. The recognition of the importance of the role of women in the context of peace operations is a strong incentive to building women's capacities within the peacekeeping landscape. It also contributes to the accessibility and credibility of United Nations deployments in local communities.

In that regard, South Africa has been developing the training programmes needed to equip our peacekeepers to deal with the unique circumstances that may develop during peace operations. In 2015, the South African Government, in partnership with UN-Women, launched a training course tailored for female military officers stationed at the South African Army School's Peace Mission Training Centre in Pretoria. A second training course, co-facilitated by South Africa and Kenya, will take place in Kenya in November. The South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation, in collaboration with the Government of Norway, has established an initiative for training and creating a network of mediators, with the ultimate objective of broadening the inclusion of women's mediation efforts all over the world. UN-Women and the United Nations Department of Political Affairs have also participated in that training programme, and the African Union has included it in its own work.

South Africa supports efforts to mainstream women's involvement in peace and security, which can be achieved through further coordination and cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations. That, we believe, can help to formalize the training of women mediators and ensure their effective mainstreaming into United Nations peacebuilding efforts. South Africa would like to encourage the United Nations to develop a database of women mediators that could ensure their meaningful participation in peacebuilding delegations. That would be in addition to cooperation between Member States on training courses designed to help build women's capacities in various specialized areas of the peace and security environment.

South Africa reaffirms its strong commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the subsequent related resolutions, as ground-breaking commitments to the advancement of the agenda on women and peace and security. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict situations, especially where sexual abuse and violence are concerned. That reality underpins the principles of resolution 1325 (2000), which addresses sexual violence in conflict and forms an integral part of the women and peace and security agenda. We stress that Member States have a fundamental responsibility to prosecute the perpetrators of human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those relating to sexual violence against women and girls. My delegation would like to emphasize its appreciation for the active role and full participation in monitoring the implementation of those resolutions by the Executive Director for UN-Women and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Resolution 2242 (2015) gives further impetus to the mandate established by resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past year, we have seen greater engagement on the part of the Council on matters relating to women and peace and security, including through the work of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. But we believe that more can be done to implement the recommendations of resolution 2242 (2015), including by interacting with women on the ground who are directly affected by conflict. The meeting, co-hosted by UN-Women and Norway and held on the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, which explored the impact of

violent extremism on women and children, was notable in that regard.

In conclusion, South Africa looks forward to further cooperation and to sharing experiences with Member States, as well as with the Department of Political Affairs, UN-Women and other partners. That will enable us to improve our incorporation of gender perspectives and the concerns of women and girls into our efforts, with the goal of enhancing sustainable peace and security in all conflict situations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by thanking the Russian presidency for convening today's open debate. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women for their valuable contributions to our debate on women and peace and security.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action remind us of the fact that there is a strong and direct relationship between sustainable peace and security and sustainable development, as well as of the fact that women and girls must be at the forefront of programmes designed to help us attain sustainable development, peace and security.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security also focuses on the specific impact of armed conflict on women; the positive role they can play in conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; as well as the important roles women can play to keep and strengthen peace and security at local, regional and international levels.

Current crises and situations, especially in the Middle East, have taken new and abhorrent forms and dimensions and constitute unprecedented challenges to the stability of our region. Women are among the main victims of these situations, grappling with the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism. The spread of violent extremism and takfiri ideology, which have no respect for women, threatens in an unprecedented way the life and rights of women and girls in our region. Women and girls have suffered the most and been targeted for systematic sexual exploitation and slavery, rape and other forms of violence by extremists and terrorists groups, such as Da'esh and Boko Haram.

The international community should make clear in every instance that there will never be any leniency for those who subject women and girls to the most inhumane acts of corporal and mental violence. Iran strongly condemns the barbaric acts of terrorist and violent extremists groups, as well as indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including women and children. In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's decision to include women's participation, leadership and empowerment as keys drivers in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The systematic violations of the legitimate human rights of the Palestinian people, including Palestinian women, under the brutal occupation of the Israeli regime and the atrocious illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip constitute a massive deprivation of the rights of Palestinian civilians and women and are certainly the most blatant form of terrorism against a whole nation imposed by a regime. It is also very unfortunate that women and girls have also fallen victim to air strikes in Yemen. As confirmed reports indicate, the unjustified invasion of Yemen by a Saudi-led coalition has led to the death of almost 10,000 people and the injury of more than 17,000 civilians, including at least 1,677 women and 2,260 children.

In closing, let me stress that my delegation believes that organizing debates like today's in the Council should not undermine the work of the most relevant bodies in considering women-related issues in the United Nations system, namely, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me first thank the Russian Federation for convening this open debate.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I thank His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and others for giving constructive insights into the progress and challenges of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. Indonesia remains committed to working with Member States, the United Nations and

other relevant actors to empower women and girls as agents for change for peace and security around the world.

Conflict is painful. It is disfiguring and debilitating to anybody's sense of humanity. Women who live in the midst of conflict are given no choice but to take charge when they lose their father, brother or husband. Resolution 1325 (2000) was a call to give notice to the important role of women as peace-brokers and catalysts for change. Foremost, it takes notice of women's resilience, despite the odds they face in conflict. Through the four pillars of resolution 1325 (2011), women were recognized as actors, not bystanders, in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Resolution 2242 (2015), which was adopted last year, provides recommendations to better implement the agenda. Moving forward, there are some pertinent points to consider.

First, peace is very challenging to establish in the aftermath of war. While the war may have ceased externally, often times it rages on internally in the hearts and minds of those affected. Difficulties and complexities in the aftermath of conflict could drag countries and societies back into conflict.

Secondly, investing in the prevention of conflict has become a necessity in today's world, which is increasingly prone to open conflicts. We need to promote the culture of peace and tolerance, and support global development that is sustainable and inclusive, particularly in conflict prone regions.

Thirdly, it is important to acknowledge the role of women, mothers and family in the prevention of radicalism and extremism and we need to work together to empower them.

Fourthly, it is important to ensure that the work of the Security Council in women and peace and security complement the work of other relevant bodies and agencies within the United Nations system. We need to strengthen interaction and information flows across the entire system. Coordination among United Nations bodies should respect and make full use of their respective mandates and competencies, particularly those whose work is relevant in promoting women's empowerment and gender equalities in all sectors, including the prevention of gender-based violence in conflict situations.

Sexual violence conducted by members of peacekeepers has been a particular concern. As an agent of peace, every peacekeeper should be held to the highest ethical and moral standards. Along this line, Indonesia supports the work of United Nations agencies in promoting zero tolerance of sexual violence and abuse in conflict. We urge United Nations agencies to strengthen their work with Member States in promoting global initiatives to protect women and children in armed conflict, such as the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative.

Fifthly, we need to strengthen the contribution of Member States in peacekeeping missions. Indonesian military and police forces are currently in 10 United Nations operations with close to 3,000 personnel in total, many of whom are female peacekeepers, who have expertise in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Indonesia's Peacekeeping Training Centre has also incorporated gender perspectives into its programme so as to equip them in the field.

The participation of women and girls in peacebuilding is a must and a prerequisite for sustainable peace. We need to address the problem of ensuring predictable and sustainable funding for women and peace and security. Setting specific numerical targets, such as allocating 15 per cent of peacebuilding funds to projects whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs and advance gender equality, is a step in the right direction.

Finally, as a candidate for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for 2019-2020, we are determined to be a true partner for peace and a promoter of women's empowerment and gender equality worldwide.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mrs. Chatardová (Czech Republic): Sixteen years ago, resolution 1325 (2000) reaffirmed the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. We agree with a statement in the global study that in an era when armed extremist groups place the subordination of women at the top of their agenda, our response should be unwavering support for empowering girls and women.

The Czech Republic seeks to strengthen the position of women in society through development cooperation

and humanitarian aid. That goal is enshrined, inter alia, in our multilateral foreign development cooperation strategy for the period 2013-2017. In order to fulfil those priorities, the Czech Republic cooperates with relevant United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. In the field of humanitarian aid, the Czech Republic pays special attention to victims of gender-based violence. The gender perspective also continues to be taken into account a cross-cutting target within projects in countries like Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Syria and Ukraine.

At Jordan's request, the Czech Republic became the lead nation of a partner cooperation and implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) programme, focused on training female Jordanian soldiers in explosive ordnance disposal. Gender mainstreaming is part and parcel of the cross-cutting principles of the Czech Republic's transition promotion programme. In 2016, projects were launched in Serbia, Zimbabwe and Palestine.

We firmly believe that girls and women are not just survivors and victims of war; they are also leaders and peace builders. Conflict through a woman's eyes brings an invaluable perspective, one which has often been ignored in our history. That is one of the reasons why the Czech Republic negotiated a resolution on equal political participation on four occasions in Geneva.

Women, however, are still underrepresented in decision-making positions in the Czech Republic. That is why, in July, the Government adopted an action plan for the balanced representation of women and men in decision-making positions for the years 2016-2018. In June 2015, the Czech Ministry of Defence adopted its own action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000). By the end of 2016, the Czech Republic will adopt a national action plan on women and peace and security for the years 2017-20.

Let me conclude by quoting the Secretary General: "Justice for women takes more than new laws and new funding. Ultimately, we need new mindsets." Having said that, let me express our readiness to promote and support the full implementation of the agenda on women and peace and security domestically as well as abroad.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Australia is appalled by the continuing use of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence in conflict and the targeting of women and girls by extremist groups. The Secretary-General's report (S/2016/822) is clear that, despite progress made on the women and peace and security agenda, there remain many gaps that require immediate action.

Human rights violations against women and girls have continued unabated. The international community must do everything it can to stop that trend. That is why Australia has provided $6 million to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and is researching the role women play in combatting extremism so that we can better understand how to tap into the valuable experiences of women to strengthen our approaches.

By harnessing the expertise of civil society organizations on the ground we can be more effective in our efforts to remove barriers and create meaningful opportunities for women to engage equally in all stages of peace processes. Civil society groups represent those whose lived experience is most relevant. In most instances, they existed before the conflict and they will exist after it. That is why Australia, working with partners, established the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI). The GAI helps women's civil society organizations to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis response, and peacebuilding. We encourage other Member States to support that practical mechanism.

At last year's high-level review (see S/PV.7533), Australia reaffirmed its commitment and set out its actions to progress the agenda on women and peace and security. In that vein, Australia last week announced further humanitarian and stabilization assistance for Iraq following commencement of the operation to retake the city of Mosul. That assistance includes particular support to the women and girls of Mosul for reproductive and sexual health. In addition, Australia recently committed $220 million in response to the Syria crisis, including dedicated components to address the unique needs of women and girls.

Australia reiterates its support for increasing the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, particularly in staff officer and military observer roles, as outlined in the London communiqué

of the United Nations peacekeeping defence ministerial meeting.

I cannot conclude without again voicing our deep concern about sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. We welcome initiatives aimed at prevention, survivor assistance and accountability, and stress again that there is no excuse for these actions, nor excuse for inaction in addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. We know that to sustain peace we must include women; not just in our words, but in our actions. And we must accelerate and strengthen practical efforts to place women front and centre in the peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We convey our appreciation to the Russian presidency for convening this open debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security.

Having played a catalytic role in the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) during Bangladesh's membership in the Security Council in 2000-2001, it has been particularly encouraging for us to see the unprecedented level of interest generated in the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) last year. In the aftermath of the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015), the issue of developing a national action plan has once again featured prominently in our policy discourse. Following preliminary discussions with UN-Women and other international partners, our Government is now exploring the opportunity to convene dialogues with a cross section of women and their representative organizations. We have agreed to join the Spanish initiative to establish the network of national focal points.

As part of our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping, we remain committed to enhancing the role and participation of women, including in our national contingents. So far, Bangladesh has had 1,047 women peacekeepers participating in various missions, including 774 police personnel. We are currently in the process of detailing two female military observers, and look forward to deploying women contingent commanders in the near future. We remain confident that we will be able to deploy a female military contingent by 2021.

Our peacekeepers know that they must take decisive action to prevent and combat sexual and gender-based violence, as part of their broader mandate on the protection of civilians. We unequivocally condemn sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, and have demonstrated our resolve to cooperate in implementing the comprehensive measures outlined in the Secretary-General's enhanced programme of action to combat these scourges.

Bangladesh welcomes the adoption of the gender strategy by the Peacebuilding Commission, and has been particularly supportive of further strengthening women's participation and leadership in this year's resolutions on peacebuilding architecture and mediation. We are relieved to learn about the mediated release and rescue of a number of women and girls held hostage by certain international and regional terrorist groups. We urge the Council to continue efforts to secure the freedom of the remaining women and girls, as their continued captivity and degrading treatment are an affront to us all.

We acknowledge the recent trend of increased women's representation in various peace negotiations, and in increasing gender-specific provisions in peace agreements. In our national context, in the aftermath of a peace accord signed with a local insurgent group in 1997, we saw how women played a critical role in advancing the accord's implementation, preventing relapse into conflict, and building awareness and resilience against gender-based violence.

In recognition of the differential impact of armed conflicts and proliferation of small arms on women and girls, Bangladesh has decided this year to co-sponsor a draft resolution entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control".

Our Government has made it a priority to further mainstream women's participation in our multidimensional efforts to combat terrorism and prevent violent extremism. Our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has made an appeal to mothers to work as sentinels within their families and has urged female teachers, elected representatives and women working at the grass-roots level to actively contribute towards a whole-of-society response against violent extremism and radicalization. We remain determined to forge ahead with our women's development and empowerment

efforts to defeat the violent extremists and terrorists in one of their fundamental pursuits.

The inherent resilience of our women gives us the conviction that women themselves have the capacity to act as agents of change in the face of the humanitarian consequences from which they disproportionately suffer in different situations. We feel encouraged to see that notion gaining traction in the humanitarian discourse. The mandate of the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action has the potential to support a further demonstration to that effect in response to specific needs in conflict and post-conflict settings.

To conclude, Bangladesh underscores the importance of the increased, sustained and coordinated mobilization of finances, including through earmarking, for giving real effect to the women and peace and security agenda in its various dimensions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Medan (Croatia): At the outset, I wish to thank the Russian presidency for convening an open debate on this crucial topic.

Croatia aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security, respectively. Allow me to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

There is a strong correlation between gender equality, peace and development. Gender equality is the only effective way to achieve sustainable peace and development. Not only women, but societies in general benefit from women's increased participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security set out a visionary agenda for achieving gender equality as a prerequisite for peaceful, inclusive and just societies.

Nearly 16 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the international community has undertaken substantial efforts to implement it, and undeniable progress has been made, including action plans, guidelines, programmes and training. Awareness has been raised of the need to include women in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and decision-making. However, the high-level review of resolution 1325 (2000) mandated under resolution 2122 (2013), which took place in October 2015, has shown that the protection of women in armed conflict, parallel to the enhancement of their contribution to peace processes and in rebuilding their communities, continues to be a crucial challenge.

As underlined in the global study, women's participation in decision-making in the sphere of peace and security worldwide remains unacceptably low, while the extent of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations continues to be devastating. What we need now is to translate the existing commitments into concrete actions that would bring tangible benefits for the advancement of women and girls in their political and economic empowerment, as well as the full realization of their human rights in times of both conflict and peace.

Member States have the primary responsibility to ensure that global commitments and obligations concerning women and peace and security are integrated into domestic policies and laws. In that regard, more cooperation between Member States would certainly advance the women and peace and security agenda and improve its implementation. That is why Croatia strongly supports the establishment of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality under the aegis of the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations. We are convinced that the Network can greatly assist Member States and regional organizations in improving and strengthening the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, thereby complementing other existing regional and United Nations initiatives, such as those of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security in New York and Geneva, different regional task forces and civil society.

Croatia's continued engagement in the area of women and peace and security rests on our firm belief that the full realization of women's rights is an indispensable basis for safeguarding basic human rights and achieving lasting peace and security. Croatia has therefore taken steps to integrate the gender perspective into the national foreign and security policy through its national policy for the promotion of gender equality and its first national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). One of the most important results of the first national action plan cycle has been an increased level of awareness of the role of women in the area of peace and security and the more effective integration of the gender perspective

into our foreign and security policy and actions. In the national security sector, the gender perspective has also been strengthened with an increased number of women involved in the activities of the security system, including intelligence agencies and their increased presence at the decision-making level.

The national action plan has also contributed to the appropriate, gender-integrated training of troops to be deployed to peacekeeping missions and operations and to an increased number of female members of the Croatian armed forces and police involved in international peacekeeping and civilian missions. Under the action plan, Croatia is also undertaking efforts to provide gender-sensitive development assistance, such as assistance for women and girls in Afghanistan in the areas of education, women's reproductive health and small businesses.

Croatia is currently in the process of developing its second national action plan, which is expected to be adopted by the end of the year. It will cover both our domestic and international activities by setting out and strengthening specific measures in the area of prevention and protection, as well as the representation of women in decision-making and processes concerning security and peacebuilding.

As a country having recently experienced war and acquired post-conflict management experience, we are particularly interested in sharing our experiences and lessons learned as a contribution to wider, global efforts in preventing and combating sexual violence in war and conflict. As a member of the group of global champions of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Combat initiative, Croatia will spare no effort in preventing and combating sexual violence in war and conflicts, and will continue to give its firm support to all areas of the women and peace and security agenda. We strongly believe that, if peace and security are to be sustained, women must be empowered, their voices heard and their participation ensured.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mrs. Gatto (Italy): I would like to thank the Russian presidency for organizing this important debate on women and peace and security.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security. Furthermore, we fully support the statement made by the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the light of our cooperation related to the upcoming split mandate in the Security Council. As a member of the Security Council for the split term in 2017 and 2018, Italy, together with the Netherlands, will continue its sustained efforts to put gender at the heart of peace and security issues and encourage other countries to join us.

There is clear evidence that no sustainable and lasting peace is possible without women's active involvement in peace processes. That is why Italy is at the forefront in supporting the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and enthusiastically co-sponsored resolution 2242 (2015), which encompasses concrete steps to further promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), especially in the area of introducing new working methods for more focused attention of the Security Council on the issue.

Despite all the achievements of the women and peace and security agenda over the past 16 years, much remains to be done. It is inconceivable that half of our societies continue to be excluded from efforts to bring, restore and maintain peace and stability, and that half of our communities should continue to bear disproportionately the cost of conflict. If we are to move further away from words and towards actions, the promotion of women in peace and security must be achieved in the areas of prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding agendas, in general and throughout the United Nations. The following are several concrete examples.

Nearly half of all peace agreements say nothing about women's rights or needs. In the majority of peace processes, the presence of women is still treated as an afterthought, although to date it has been proven as a fact that involving women in conflict prevention and resolution increases our chances of success. That is why we are implementing the commitments made at the peacekeeping defence ministerial in London in September, which recognized the indispensable role of women in peacekeeping and in conflict resolution as a whole. Italy is particularly interested in increasing the participation of women in uniformed roles, including police roles, and in promoting the integration of women's needs and gender perspectives into all aspects of peacekeeping and in efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution. In this period, Italy has

committed to supporting the initiative of UN-Women on the role of women in mediation.

Secondly, women and girls are increasingly victims of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence. Such risks increase in emergencies, conflicts and post-conflicts situations. The women and peace and security agenda seeks to address such risks, giving the issue of sexual violence in conflicts the centrality it deserves, alongside the economic and political empowerment of women and their vital role in peacebuilding. Italy is strongly committed to preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based crimes in conflict. We are especially active in training Blue Helmets on those issues, and we fully support international initiatives for preventing sexual violence in conflict at both the political and at the operational level.

Thirdly, we believe that special attention to a comprehensive strategy is needed to prevent the radicalization of women and girls in order to ensure a viable alternative to nihilists and extremists, which has a dramatic impact on all our communities.

Let me conclude by saying that these are important priorities for Italy and that we are cognizant that efforts are needed in all countries, not just developing or conflict-ridden ones. That is why we are currently reviewing the third iteration of our of action plan on women and peace and security with a view to promoting the paradigm of the empowerment of women as agents for change. At the same time, we are aware that especially fragile States can greatly benefit from a joint effort to shape national-level policy-making and to generate strategic cross-national partnerships for gender equality. That approach is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are based on respect for human rights for all.

We look forward to working with all States, members and non-members of the Security Council, the United Nations and regional organizations to turn that agenda into reality.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, allow me to commend the Russian Federation for convening this open debate on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of the women and peace and security agenda. This is an opportunity to underscore the commitment of Member States to empowering women and to facilitating their participation in conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and in decision-making on matters relating to peace and security. I would like to thank Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, and Ms. Rita Lopidia, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, for their statements.

A year ago the Security Council adopted resolution 2242 (2015). As Guatemala was one of the 72 sponsors of the resolution, we are happy to inform the Council that pursuant to the resolution, the Government of Guatemala has established an inter-agency panel on women, peace and security in order to improve governmental coordination for the establishment of a national plan of action, which is expected to be completed this year.

The appropriate implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) requires the unwavering political will of all competent Government authorities, requiring the allocation of clearly earmarked resources both in national budgets and in the contributions of international donors. Governments and civil society should work together and complement each other's efforts.

We reiterate that the prevention and protection of women against gender violence and sexual abuse require the involvement of all, including men and boys. We strongly condemn cases of sexual violence and the fact that it continues to be used as a tactic of intimidation or terrorism. We also condemn violence and sexual abuse in peacekeeping operations. We demand the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy. Security forces entrusted with ensuring the security and integrity of women as an important aspect of peace and security must be made to understand that.

Guatemala is striving to combat impunity and to bring the perpetrators of sexual abuse to justice. In that regard, early this year we brought to justice two soldiers who were responsible for the sexual enslavement of 15 Quechi women in the military base of Sepur Zarco. Although it took 32 years to bring this case to trial, we believe that it is worth mentioning because access to justice should be guaranteed for all Guatemalans. However, we must improve access to justice and strengthen the participation of women in the process of drafting national legislation.

We welcome the fact that the women and peace and security agenda is being addressed in a cross-cutting fashion, in coordination with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. It is also worth noting the establishment of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and of the national focal point network for women and peace and security on 23 September under the leadership of Spain.

Moreover, we acknowledge the contribution of mechanisms, such as the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, together with additional existing mechanisms, as a way not only to raise resources, but to coordinate responses and accelerate implementation. The participation of women is essential to ensuring operational effectiveness and ensure sustainable peace. The concept of sustainable peace is very important, as Ambassador Rosenthal mentions in his report (S/2015/490).

The Rome Statute, which is the international legal framework on gender-based crimes, is the most progressive to date. It is important to incorporate it into national legislation so that States have a comprehensive framework for investigations into international crimes of sexual and gender-based violence, targeted proceedings to support victims and witnesses, programmes to inform women of the laws that concern them, resources to monitor the implementation of laws that take the gender perspective into account, and provisions for the compensation of victims. All of those components are essential to ensuring that women have access to justice.

Guatemala has always supported that agenda and eiterates that women play an essential role in preventing and resolving conflicts, promoting justice, fostering reconciliation, supporting disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration, and rebuilding national institutions. Women are the critical link in development as they are the centre of the family and the source of its values, customs and the identity of each child. All these are essential pillars for consolidating lasting peace. It is essential that women be involved in decision-making at all levels.

In conclusion, we urge all Member States represented here to take this unique opportunity to move towards a much stronger and substantive commitment to gender equality so as to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls becomes one of the cornerstones of peacebuilding.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Sobral Duarte (Brazil): I would like to begin by thanking the Russian Federation for organizing this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive-Director of UN-Women and Ms. Lopidia for their briefings.

Many positive steps have been taken to implement the resolutions on women and peace and security. However, despite those efforts, women are still a minority in peace and security negotiations and in peacekeeping operations. Our challenge remains to fully implement the eight Council resolutions on women and peace and security, including the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). Women are proven agents of change and should be able to do even more. Today's conflicts continue to have a tragic feature in common. Women and girls suffer their impact disproportionately more because they are also targets of specific forms of violence and abuse, including sexual violence and exploitation. Efforts to resolve conflicts and address their root causes should aim to empower all those who have suffered from them, especially women.

Brazil was honoured to participate in the foundational meeting of the women and peace and security national focal points network that took place at the margins of the General Assembly recent general debate. As discussed at that meeting and underlined in the global study for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Member States and regional organizations remain the most influential actors regarding the women and peace and security agenda. We commend Spain for its leadership in the creation of the network.

Women should play a crucial role in bolstering conflict prevention. In the short-term, they can lead efforts aimed at promoting pre-emptive dialogue and early warning systems. In the long-term, they can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and contribute to solutions to conflict. It is also important to explore the synergies between the women and peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly regarding the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5, without losing sight of their specificities and the integrity and universality of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past few years, the women and peace and security agenda has been integrated into the political mainstream of the United Nations. United Nations entities, including UN-Women, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Commision on the Status of Women, have contributed in that regard. Likewise, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and several rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council have diligently worked to strengthen that vital agenda. It would be inconceivable today to establish a peacekeeping operation without deploying gender advisers, without including a mandate to protect women or without training peacekeepers to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse, as highlighted by many countries in September during the peacekeeping defence ministerial in London.

The complex humanitarian crises arising from conflicts highlight the plight of women and girls who have been subject to various forms of sexual violence and forced abandonment of their homes and communities. They have become refugees and internally displaced persons. In that context, we should ensure that we give particular attention to women and girls who belong to more vulnerable groups, including indigenous or older women, those with disabilities and members of ethnic or religious minorities. Brazil remains strongly engaged in the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment issues at all levels and areas of work of the United Nations.

Protection and empowerment are inseparable aspects of the women and peace and security agenda. At the international level, that includes formulating and implementing the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, conducting peace negotiations and handling peacebuilding, recovery and humanitarian initiatives. At the domestic level, Governments should be ready to redesign and improve gender-sensitive policies.

Brazil has made considerable progress in the past decade and remains a vocal advocate and staunch supporter of United Nations efforts to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Our South-South cooperation is closely aligned with that agenda. We have, for instance, supported projects to assist victims of sexual and gender-based violence in Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. The Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Centre in Rio de Janeiro regularly holds workshops and courses to train peacekeepers on gender issues and the protection of women. Rigorous standards regarding the conduct and discipline of personnel are upheld.

We are confident that our national efforts will positively influence all of our activities in the international arena. We are also finalizing our national action plan on women and peace and security. It will comprise measures, such as fostering the participation of women in peace missions, that will further enhance the relationship between troops and civilians, particularly women and girls, in peace operations and provide humanitarian assistance and technical cooperation to post-conflict countries concerning gender issues. That initiative will strengthen and build upon the provisions of our national policy plan on women, which already embraces several recommendations contained in resolution 1325 (2000).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Thoms (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and that delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security.

About a year ago, we met in this Chamber for the high-level review on women and peace and security (see S/PV.7533). On that occasion, a record number of speakers in the history of the Council voiced their support for the agenda built on resolution 1325 (2000). However, despite some progress, huge implementation gaps remain, as today's briefings have clearly demonstrated. I would like to particularly thank Rita Lopidia from EVE, who spoke about the difficult situation of women in South Sudan in a very impressive manner.

I will keep my remarks short and operational. After all, the shortcomings in the implementation of the women and peace and security framework are due not to a lack of words, but to a lack of action.

How can we do better here in New York? A year ago, the adoption of resolution 2242 (2015) gave the Council a clear mandate to be more inclusive and to involve civil society in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The Council needs to live up to that commitment and should open its country-specific considerations for briefings by civil society whenever possible. Germany sees

the establishment of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security as a major institutional milestone. Within less than a year of its existence, the Expert Group has already assessed four country situations, in close collaboration with United Nations field missions on the ground. We now need to ensure that the excellent outcomes of the Group reach the Council more frequently and directly.

How can we improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the regional level? The Council has rightly called upon regional organizations to partake in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. As part of our Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) chairmanship, Germany has heeded that call and has appointed a Special Representative of the OSCE Chairpersonship-in-Office on Gender Issues. Next month we will host a meeting in Berlin on women and peace and security that will discuss ways to accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) both within the OSCE framework and beyond.

Where do we stand on the implementation on the national level? Germany is currently revising its national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000). We look forward to exchanging our lessons learned with partners, not just here in New York, but also at the capital level. Germany has also taken an active role in the setup of the focal points network founded by Spain. We are proud to host the 2018 meeting of the network in Berlin. We are currently working with UN-Women, the African Union (AU) and the AU Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop, to explore ways to facilitate the exchange of experiences between African women leaders.

We encourage the next Secretary-General to continue to treat the women and peace and security agenda as a high priority. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) remains a cross-cutting task for the entire United Nations system, not just the Security Council. We see the women and peace and security agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as interlinked. That means that we need to approach their implementation in tandem.

Those present can count on Germany's support in taking practical and specific steps to transform the women and peace and security framework into action.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of NATO.

Ms. Shuurman: Gender equality is not optional. It is essential. Why? Because it allows us to respond better and smarter to the many complex security challenges that we face today. Gender equality is about our credibility and our capability. It is about the resilience of our societies, the readiness of our forces and the effectiveness of our operations. That is what NATO has learned from more than a decade and a half of implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

At its Summit in July, NATO endorsed a new action plan on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, and 55 allies and partner nations associated themselves with the plan. We now host what could well be the largest global coalition on implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We continue to build our coalition inside and out. Last week, NATO broke new ground when we hosted our first ever civil society advisory panel. This is about cementing our dialogue — the dialogue between NATO and those representatives of civil society who work on conflict prevention and resolution and women's empowerment. If peace is to be sustainable, we must be inclusive.

We still have a long way to go, but NATO is doing a great deal, and we keep things as practical as possible. We continue to learn from our operations, missions, training and exercises. Gender perspectives are now at the centre of NATO defence planning and reporting processes. NATO supports the implementation of resolution 2242 (2015) by financing research on the role of gender in countering violent extremism. NATO strategic commands are now implementing the military guidelines on preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual violence scars families, rips societies apart and slows down peacekeeping and conflict resolution processes. It affects the success of NATO missions. We cannot be bystanders. We need to look at ourselves, too, by raising awareness of NATO codes of conduct and other tools designed to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

We can do better, however. Just 10 per cent of NATO armed forces are women; of those deployed in operations, it is just 5.5 per cent. We understand that improving this ratio will improve effectiveness, and we urge Member States to do their part. We support the United Nations pledge in London to double the proportion of women in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Again, we need to lead by example. The gender balance in the NATO leadership is now improving,

after years of stagnation. Last week we proudly welcomed the first female NATO Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Rose Gottemoeller. In June, our first female four-star American Admiral Michelle Howard, assumed command of the NATO Joint Force Command, Naples. The NATO Defence College in Rome will be led by a woman, too — Canadian Lieutenant-General Christine Whitecross. We know that we need to keep up this momentum, and we will, because equal participation is not a favour to women. It is a hard-core security requirement. It is essential to the resilience of our societies, to the effectiveness of our forces and to a modern, ready and responsive Alliance. But above all, it is fundamental to achieving lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the Russian Federation for organizing this debate.

The historic adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) 16 years ago represented international recognition of the role played by women in matters of peace and security, not only as victims but also as agents of change and essential players in the restoration, maintenance and building of peace. A number of resolutions followed, enshrinomg greater political recognition of the question of women and peace and security with precise and clear provisions regarding the need to ensure the fair representation of women and men in peace processes and to improve the physical and legal protection of women and girls.

Despite signs of progress, we are forced to note that the overall result is far from being satisfactory. Evaluations of the achievements of the 15 past years clearly show that the participation of women in negotiation processes has remained low. Between 1992 and 2011, only 9 per cent of negotiators were women. Only 27 per cent of peace agreements signed between 2000 and 2015 referred to women's gender equality and the needs of women. Women make up just 3 per cent of the positions of authority throughout the world. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, today only 2 per cent of foreign funds invested in reviving the economies of post-conflict countries are allocated to promoting the equality of women, their empowerment or the satisfaction of their specific needs for a period of time.

And yet, women constitute half of the world's population. Their involvement in peacebuilding remains not only a right, but also, given the disproportionate impact of conflict on their lives, an obligation. They can make an undeniably valuable contribution to peace negotiations. It is therefore necessary to change the paradigm so as to change the status quo and give women more power so as to shake up the established order. Indeed, the participation of women in negotiating processes increases the chances of a settlement of conflict and the sustainability of peace. That fact was confirmed by a global study undertaken by UN-Women in 2015, which revealed that the presence of women in peace negotiations promoted the sustainability of peace agreements, and that 35 per cent of agreements negotiated by women lasted more than 15 years.

Morocco has adopted a voluntary, proactive policy to entrench the principles of gender equality, which is now enshrined in my country's Constitution. In addition to legislative texts, Morocco has committed itself to significant legal and institutional reforms to promote a culture of gender equality and the gender perspective. It is in that context that in 2012 Morocco launched, in partnership with Spain, an initiative on the promotion of the role women in the mediation process in the Mediterranean. That initiative has enabled us to give mediation training to a number of Mediterranean women so as to ensure that they are available to the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

In addition, on 7 September Morocco organized an international conference on the topic of women and peace and security. The conference contributed to the international debate on the role of women in peace processes and the implementation of national plans of action to promote collective action on implementing resolution 1325 (2000). It was an occasion to reaffirm the international community's consensus on the need to strengthen the participation of women in negotiations and agreements concerning the settlement of conflicts and peacebuilding, as well as to renew the commitment of the United Nations to the question of the inclusion of women and gender equality in all strategies aimed at restoring peace and preventing conflict. A number of questions were debated at the conference, including the role of women in mediation and conflict-prevention processes, the role of women in deradicalization, lessons learned and best practices in the prevention of sexual violence in conflict.

At the conference, my country announced the creation in Rabat of an independent regional centre dedicated to studying the role of women in peacekeeping

operations and their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development. The centre could serve as a space for reflection, a reservoir of ideas and a source of independent thought regarding the role and place of women in peacekeeping operations, as well as peacebuilding in conflict zones. It is in keeping with the priorities of the Security Council, in terms of the promotion and empowerment of women, gender equality, the building of peace and international security, the dissemination of the culture of peace, ensuring access to justice and the protection of civil rights.

An essential element of the women and peace and security programme is conflict prevention. Women's perpectives in dealing with social tensions; their awareness of threats to personal, familial and community threats; their knowledge of the flow and circulation of small arms and light weapons, particularly within their communities; and their interpretation of extremism in local discourse all contribute to the creation of primary mechanisms for rapid response, early warning and intelligence of imminent conflicts that may be rarely understood or heeded by local security authorities.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Russian*): Viet Nam thanks the Russian presidency for convening today's very important open debate, as it gives States Members of the United Nations an opportunity to take up the women and peace and security agenda.

(*spoke in English*)

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (S/2016/822) and his briefing. I also thank the Executive Director of UN-Women for her briefing and insights.

Viet Nam associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Viet Nam welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. We particularly applaud the increased participation of women and the inclusion of the gender perspective in all areas, from conflict prevention to peacebuilding and from peace processes to reconstruction efforts. Viet Nam is also pleased to see the added impetus that last year's high-level review provided for the implementation of commitments under the women and peace and security agenda. Viet Nam believes that implementation lies first and foremost with States, but real success can be assured only by establishing partnerships, especially with a better-coordinated and well-resourced United Nations.

Yet Viet Nam remains gravely concerned about the continuing violence targeting women and girls, especially those displaced by conflicts. Viet Nam condemns all acts of violence and abuse against women and girls. We call for strengthened efforts by the United Nations and Member States in addressing this issue. We urge the United Nations to strictly implement its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

Peace can be sustained only if conflicts can be prevented and addressed at their roots. Viet Nam welcomes a sharper focus on conflict prevention, including peaceful dispute settlement and preventive diplomacy. Efforts should also focus on the socioeconomic development and post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction, as affirmed in resolution 1889 (2009), introduced by Viet Nam and unanimously adopted by the Security Council in 2009.

For its part, Viet Nam fully recognizes the crucial role of women in conflict prevention and settlement, State-building, sustaining peace and socioeconomic development. For centuries, Vietnamese women not only fought valiantly for the country's freedom and independence but also worked hard and contributed significantly to the recovery and development of the country towards stability, sustainable development and international integration. Today, as part of our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping, Vietnamese women officers are taking part in training and making the necessary preparations to be deployed in the near future in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Paul Bekkers, Director of the Office of the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Bekkers: I am very honoured to be here at Security Council this afternoon.

One of the greatest challenges of modern times is the normalization of violence at all levels — be it local, regional, national or international — as it poses a real threat to the lives of women and children. Indeed,

attacks on women and girls, as well as the horror of sexual slavery, are sometimes part of the strategies used by combatants and violent extremist groups to achieve their ends. This morning we heard several dreadful examples of this fact.

Like you, Mr. President, we believe that this must stop, and resolution 1325 (2000) is part of the solution. I therefore thank you, Sir, for bringing us together today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/822) and the Executive Director of UN-Women for her briefing.

The Secretary-General mentioned this morning that progress has been made. That may be true, but it is disappointing that implementation continues to lag. The Secretary-General mentioned that there is growing awareness, but that there is also a huge lack of funding for initiatives relating to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Our support for implementation must go beyond rhetoric. We need to walk the talk.

The women and peace and security agenda plays a central role in the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is the largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Our efforts to prevent conflicts and resolve disputes peacefully are underpinned by our strong commitment to gender equality. Gender equality is a fundamental principle that cuts across the full gamut of security issues that the OSCE addresses.

The OSCE acknowledges the clear evidence that the participation of women in all phases of the conflict cycle — from conflict prevention and crisis management to conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation — is critical to the success and sustainability of peace processes and peacebuilding. Various speakers have shared much evidence on this point with us today.

For us, the OSCE, there is still a long way to go, but I would like to share a few of our achievements thus far. At this point, I would like to acknowledge and thank the representative of Germany for his comments as Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE.

First of all, the 63 existing national action plans, 28 are from the OSCE region alone, and several more are in the making. We continue to work with our participating States to improve their plans or develop new ones.

Secondly, we have established within the OSCE a network of 60 gender focal points, covering our 17 field operations, three institutions and a secretariat to support the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by participating States and to develop our own internal compliance, which is important to us.

Thirdly, reducing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict also means addressing violence against women and domestic violence in times of peace. That is another focus of our work. For example, in July we organized a conference on combating violence against women where we exchanged good practices and promoted the ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Fourthly, I would like to mention that the OSCE also recognizes the important role women can play in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. Accordingly, next month we will convene a conference on this topic that will bring together policymakers, experts and activists from across the OSCE region.

I would like to stress that, in everything we do, we strive to strengthen our cooperation and engagement with other international organizations and civil-society organizations. For example, we have developed close cooperation with UN- Women in Ukraine on the implementation of the new Ukrainian national action plan.

I have just mentioned some of our achievements, but we still have a long way to go. We are aware that we need to look inward as well. We need to create a better gender balance in our own OSCE structures, in particular in the politico-military dimension.

Before I conclude, I would like to commend the Spanish initiative to set up the women and peace and security national focal point network. We look forward to engaging with this forum.

You may rest assured, Mr. President, as may all others present, that the OSCE remains committed to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), with a view to countering the normalization of violence, promoting peace and security, eradicating gender-based violence and improving the participation of women. We rely on the support of the Security Council as we strive to work in close cooperation with all stakeholders.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Georgia aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the delegation of the European Union (EU). I would like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

We welcome this annual debate of the Security Council on women and peace and security and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also welcome the report (S/2016/822) of the Secretary-General.

One of my country's persistent concerns relates to the implementation of this resolution in conflict-affected territories. We all know that 20 per cent of my country's territory remains under illegal foreign military occupation and that hundreds of thousands of Georgian internally displaced persons and refugees who are victims of ethnic cleansing are denied the right to return to their homes, while the fundamental rights of women and girls inside the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions in South Ossetia continue to be neglected.

My Government spares no effort to develop and implement higher standards for the full protection of women's rights. We fully recognize the benefits of enhancing women's leadership and participation in decision-making in conflict resolution, prevention and management processes. Our strong commitment is well reflected our the national action plan on women and peace and security, and Georgia was one of the first countries to adopt a separate policy document on this very important topic.

Georgia shares the view that effective conflict prevention must start from an understanding of the broad and deep insecurity that permeates women's lives prior to conflict and the ways that pre-conflict structural inequality can facilitate violence and insecurity, as stated in the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). At the same time, we need to address the current challenges in peacekeeping in a comprehensive and transparent way that acknowledges the centrality of the protection of civilians. Georgia is fully committed to a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping and to ensuring the full accountability of perpetrators, by responding to alleged crimes in a survivor-centred manner.

It was precisely with that approach that the Georgian Government and the Georgian armed forces reacted immediately to the allegations voiced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in January with regard to the sexual abuse cases involving minors by members of foreign military forces in the Central African Republic. Having condemned any violence against local civilian populations, the Georgian Government created an ad hoc inter-agency investigation team, involving not only the representative of the Office of the Prosecutor and the Minister of Defence, but also experts on human rights and child protection services, as well as psychologists.

The team established direct communication and worked closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the Executive Director of UNICEF, the European Union Military Committee, as well as the Legal Director of Medecins sans frontieres. Georgia officially requested the engagement of all the relevant parties in the investigation process by assigning respective points of contact on the ground. In June 2016, the team travelled to Bangui for the on site phase of the investigation, conducting inquiries and interviews with alleged victims in close cooperation with the EU, MINUSCA and UNICEF. United Nations agencies acknowledged that the team was highly professional and exemplary.

Materials collected during the visit to the Central African Republic are being carefully studied. So far, preliminary investigation data reveal no sign of Georgian soldiers' involvement in the crimes committed. Should the results of the investigation prove them innocent, Georgia would appreciate acknowledgement by the relevant United Nations bodies.

We hope that the measures undertaken by my Government that I mentioned will serve as an example of best practice when it comes to a prompt and effective response to cases of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. We also encourage other countries to do the same as, we believe that only through such an approach can we produce a sustained change in dealing with the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse in conflict situations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Ms. Azucena (Philippines): I thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate as we mark one year since the

high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. The Philippines takes this opportunity once again to renew its commitment to effectively implement this initiative and its support for the Security Council's important work on this matter. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and our civil society partners for their informative briefings.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, delivered earlier today by my colleague from Thailand, and with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security.

As the first country in Asia to develop a national action plan, in 2010, the Philippines has been steadily implementing the provisions of its plan on a national scale. Our six-year national action plan has four interrelated and complementary purposes, with corresponding outcomes, indicators, time frames and key implementers. The Philippines national action plan rests on four pillars: first, protection and prevention to ensure the protection of women's human rights; secondly, empowerment and participation to empower women and ensure their active and meaningful participation in the areas of peacebuilding, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstructio; thirdly, promotion and mainstreaming to promote and mainstream gender perspectives in all aspects of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and, fourthly, capacity development and monitoring and reporting to institutionalize a system to monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation of the national action plan in order to enhance accountability for the successful implementation and achievement of its goals.

Since the Philippines formulated the national action plan it has focused on the localization of the four pillars of the plan. There are now 41 provinces within conflict zones that have developed their ow local action plans. Identifying their own specific concerns and prioritizing them has made the national action plan relevant to such local areas. The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, the co-Chair of the steering committee of the national action plan, is committed to engaging more local Government units to formulate their own local action plans. The Philippines believes that States can benefit from each other's national experiences in enriching their own programmes. It is in that context that the Philippines was happy to sign up to the women and peace and security focal points network, which was launched here in New York last September. We thank the Government of Spain for that initiative. We discovered that some States found our experience in the partnership between Government and civil society particularly useful. We believe that the focal point network will make this sharing of experiences more efficient and timely, and we look forward to taking advantage of this tool.

I am also proud to announce that the Philippines is represented in the roster of Justice Rapid Response by three Filipino professionals, who can be requested by the international community to investigate, analyse and report on situations where serious human rights and international criminal violations have been reported. The Philippines is happy for the opportunity to contribute its talents to the work of the women and peace and security agenda through Justice Rapid Response.

As we now go forward in the process of negotiating a peace agreement with the Communist Party of the Philippines and its Front and armed group and in implementing the peace agreement signed with two Moro Liberation Fronts, the Philippines is committed, more than ever, to working towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Our Government recognizes that that landmark international instrument is there for Governments like ours to adhere to. Certainly, there is a need for women to be protected as the victims of violence and war but, as stated in resolution 1325 (2000), we further recognize that women's leadership is critical to finding enduring solutions to destructive and dehumanizing conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Gambia.

Mr. Tangara (Gambia): The Islamic Republic of the Gambia would like to align itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Union.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Russian Federation for being at the helm of the Security Council for the month of October. I commend the President for the able manner in which he has conducted the affairs and proceedings of our meeting and for including the issue of women and peace and security on the agenda of the Security Council. It is an issue to which my delegation attaches great importance. I also thank the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women for the very exhaustive briefings they presented.

As a country in which women represent 51 per cent of the population, the Islamic Republic of the Gambia welcomes this debate on women and peace and security. Over the years, we have come to recognize the importance of women in peacebuilding and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, yet we have not been able to give women the requisite power or even status to play a role in the achievement of peace and security.

We recognize the gallant efforts of the United Nations as exemplified in many resolutions, especially resolution 1325 (2000), which enjoins us all to involve women in peacekeeping, the prevention of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Unfortunately, time and circumstances have shown that lack of political will, intolerance leading to conflicts, and archaic laws continue to serve as obstacles to the full participation of women in the quest for peace and security.

The only effective way to facilitate the direct involvement of women in efforts aimed at creating a culture of peace in the world is to ensure that women have access and a voice at the table where policies and programmes are articulated. In almost all cases, women in peacekeeping operations are relegated to secondary roles. Yet there are many roles, especially in the negotiating process, in which women can play an effective role and make effective contributions.

As a start, we should encourage the appointment of more women to key and pivotal positions in peacekeeping operations. We note the positive move in Darfur, where the Commissioner of Police is a woman. In Abidjan, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is also a woman. There are other such appointments, but more needs to be done.

We cannot speak of peace without taking concrete steps to outlaw violence against women. It is sad, indeed tragic, that women and girls are still subjected to rape and other forms of violence. Women are the soft targets in any conflict, and now we are witnessing the alarming rate at which the rape of women is being used as a weapon of war. This atrocity must stop, and we wish to add our voice in condemning it as a gross violation of human rights.

Rape, with all the pain and indignities it entails, should not only be condemned but also prosecuted. It should be prosecuted as a human rights violation punishable by stiff penalties. Rape in war zones should be made a crime against humanity and prosecuted by all countries. Those who use rape and violence against women should have no place to hide, and we should articulate international laws that will give all countries the right to prosecute the perpetrators of this horrible act if they enter our jurisdictions.

I also wish to underscore the importance of education in our quest to further peace and security. Our experience in the Gambia is that when given opportunities, women constitute a formidable force capable of transforming a nation. That is why we in the Gambia regard women as agents of change and progress. The world will benefit from the vast knowledge and experience of women if we empower them in the context of the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. As pillars of our societies and natural pacifiers, women, along with men, can be valuable agents that can change the world.

We have made some progress, but much remains to be done. There is a need to work on breaking down the barriers of age-old prejudices against women. Traditional society's entrenched notions about women must be eradicated through education and persuasion. We call on all national Governments and the United Nations to adopt a policy of affirmative action that will bring women into the mainstream of activities. What is at stake is crucial, because the continued exclusion of women from the peace and security processes will render our efforts invalid.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Ms. Pires (Timor-Leste): My delegation congratulates the Russian Federation for having convened this annual open debate on women and peace and security: implementing the common agenda.

We wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) (S/2016/822), the Executive Director of UN-Women for her comprehensive and informative remarks, and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for its contribution.

Important steps have been taken to further implement the women and peace and security agenda since the last debate on this issue (see S/PV.7704), including increased gender provisions in signed peace agreements. While we are encouraged by these good practices, including those that were part of the process leading to the Colombia peace accord, and commend the Secretary-General and the United Nations system

on the important steps taken to press for, facilitate and support the inclusion of women in peace negotiations, we cannot be complacent with respect to the progress made but must continue in our resolve towards the full implementation of the agenda.

When we look at the world's trouble spots, we can see that women and children continue to suffer disproportionately in times of conflict and in post-conflict situations. The peace and security challenges have not lessened and in some cases have been exacerbated and have grown in complexity, bringing great suffering to those affected, in particular women and children.

Violence against women and children, including sexual violence, is devastating and has life-long effects. It must be strongly condemned and those responsible held accountable so as to break the continuum of violence. This, of course, includes any cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by some United Nations peacekeepers. Funds are needed to also ensure that survivors can be supported in beginning the difficult task of dealing with their experiences and reconstructing their lives.

Timor-Leste is fully committed to the empowerment and the advancement of women and gender equality. Earlier this year, on 26 April, the Council of Ministers adopted a five-year national action plan on women and peace and security. During its recent launch, our Prime Minister highlighted the need for women to actively participate in decision-making and expressed the hope that the plan would increase the participation of women, working together with men for the development of the country.

Timor-Leste's national action plan is the product of a comprehensive and inclusive process and sets out the actions to be taken with respect to four key pillars, namely, participation, prevention, protection and peacebuilding. The plan promotes and guarantees women's participation in all decision-making positions and processes, including in the defence and security sectors, peacebuilding and development. It proposes concrete actions to review and change laws, policies and programmes aimed at the promotion of women and girls' right to a life in peace and security, and at ensuring their equal and active participation and leadership in peacebuilding, State-building and development.

The implementation of the plan will involve a whole-of-Government approach as well as civil-society organizations, and accountability will be ensured through a monitoring committee that will be made up of Members of Parliament and non-governmental organizations. We are grateful to UN-Women for all of its support in the process to date.

We are confident that as Timorese women participate in and benefit from such activities, our society will be more inclusive, our people will be empowered to participate in and contribute to development, and Timor-Leste will ultimately become stronger.

We have today, through our national action plans on resolution 1325 (2000); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and its general recommendation No. 30, on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations; and the recommendations of the three reviews that took place last year, a comprehensive framework on furthering the women and peace and security agenda.

We are confident that with political will, we all can continue to strive to move forward.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to start by saying how pleased I am to be able to participate in this debate on women and peace and security. I wish also to thank the two briefers for their presentations and also to welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General within the framework of this issue. We also reiterate our support for the implementation of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015).

Sudanese women have always been essential partners in preparing and participating in parliamentary and presidential elections, including those held this past year. Today, 30 per cent of our parliamentarians are women. Women hold important positions in Government. They are and have always been essential partners within the framework of the national dialogue launched in 2014 by the President of the Republic, the results of which we celebrated on 10 October. Women make up 66 per cent of the civil servants of the Sudan. We can therefore rightly state that women in the Sudan serve as an example, as they have enjoyed all of their rights for almost 60 years.

As one example, Sudanese women enjoyed the right to vote and to run for office back in 1955, well before women in many other countries around the

world, including those of the other continents. Women also participate in and are members of our security and police forces. They are legal practitioners and work in the diplomatic services. We consider their participation in civil society to be essential. Women's associations have contributed to expanding women's participation in many fields, thereby strengthening the implementation of international strategies and policies, including in the context of relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Sudan continues to abide by its commitments in that area. Indeed, we have adopted a strategy for women covering close to a quarter of a century, from 2003 to 2027. We have adopted a national strategy to combat violence against women, a national policy to empower women, a national demographic policy, a national plan for Sudanese women, and a national law against human trafficking, including of women and girls. In the framework of lessons learned, I refer to two provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which guarantees the rights of women in all executive, legislative and judicial bodies and incorporates all provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), concerning women and peace and security. The resolution calls for the strengthening of women's participation in peacekeeping operations and all efforts aimed at establishing and building peace.

Strengthening women's participation in decision-making is necessary to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. The protection of women also requires our attention, especially in the case of conflict or natural disaster. Anything that impacts women also impacts children. There can be no lasting military solution to an armed conflict. The use of force is always a temporary measure dictated by the need to defend oneself, civilians or territorial integrity and to maintain law and order, but in the end there is always a need to achieve a negotiated solution.

The earlier that is accomplished, the better. Early conflict settlement spares and saves a great many lives. When such an agreement is concluded, all parties, domestic and foreign, must refrain from undermining it. The United Nations must adopt that principle and tolerate no exceptions in that regard, in the context of peacekeeping operations. We condemn all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse carried out by United Nations peacekeepers, and support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy.

We also condemn the intolerance and violent extremism that are a source of concern for the whole world today, especially given the increase in the number and power of extremist groups that are attacking the principles of peace, justice, human dignity, in complete contravention to the basic tenets of the United Nations, as well as development efforts and human rights principles. The United Nations must confront those threats and take all necessary measures to protect women and children. We are gratified to learn of the Secretary-General's contribution in that field.

In keeping with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, we call for the adoption of a comprehensive approach that takes the women and peace and security agenda into account in the resolution and settlement of conflicts, the need for capacity-building and the strengthening of technical assistance and cooperation with countries, given the fact that gaps and inequalities in development efforts are among the main causes of conflict. We call for the lifting of constraints on national efforts, including unilateral sanctions, and of foreign debt and sanctions imposed on countries affected by conflict.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): Let me at the very outset thank and congratulate the Russian delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. My delegation also thanks you the Russian presidency for convening the Security Council open debate on implementing the common agenda in relation to the agenda item "Women and peace and security".

Our special thanks go to the Secretary-General for his annual report (S/2016/822) and to Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women and Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of the EVE Organization for Women Development, South Sudan, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Botswana welcomes the annual open debate on women and peace and security, as convened by this body since 2000. Through these debates, Member States and civil society organizations have been given the opportunity to discuss various themes aimed at enhancing women's participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and decision-making in matters related to international peace and security.

We consider today's open debate to be of the utmost importance to assessing the progress made following the 2015 global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the 2015 report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2015/716), and the adoption of the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women and Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. In that regard, Botswana welcomes the adoption of the Global Acceleration Instrument, which aims at accelerating the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by building capacity and increasing funding for women's participation, leadership and empowerment, as well as humanitarian action.

We are pleased that although the Global Acceleration Instrument is still in its infancy, women mediators in some conflict-affected countries have been involved in conflict prevention and resolution efforts. The outcomes of such efforts have been encouraging. Given the positive outcomes of the Global Acceleration Instrument, we appeal to Member States and civil society organizations to support that noble initiative.

Botswana is deeply concerned that women continue to bear the brunt of armed conflicts, domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape and humanitarian crises. In that regard, it is imperative that we build the capacity of women to prevent violence, conflict and extremism and enhance their capacities to respond to humanitarian crises and emergencies. We are also concerned that the participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding remains low at the national, regional and international levels, although studies show that women's involvement would significantly contribute to sustainable peace and stability.

Botswana supports the global efforts aimed at addressing challenges to the women and peace and security agenda, including increasing women's representation, leadership and empowerment in all facets of peacebuilding, security and humanitarian action. We also recognize the critical importance of gender equality and mainstreaming in national development plans and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In conclusion, we applaud the efforts made by the Security Council since 2000 to regularly convene these open debates, which place women and peace and security matters at the top of the global agenda. We therefore call for the rigorous implementation and monitoring of the commitments made during the open debates.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): We too thank the Russian presidency for organizing this open debate. We welcome the continuing attention paid to the women and peace and security agenda in the Chamber and thank the Secretary-General for his recent report (S/2016/822). We consider resolution 1325 (2000) to be an important milestone in terms of addressing the impact of armed conflict on women. Resolution 2242 (2015), adopted last year, was also a timely step forward.

Unfortunately, today the severe effects of conflicts in various regions on women and girls still constitute a significant challenge that needs to be addressed by the international community. Furthermore, our world is now facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, with an increasing influx of displaced populations due to protracted conflicts and lack of security. That causes even further difficulties to vulnerable groups, including women and girls. Yet, it was promising to see that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment emerged as an overarching theme of the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May. It will be equally important to transform such commitments into action.

The horrific acts perpetrated against women and girls by terrorist organizations, such as Da'esh and Boko Haram, require a comprehensive approach to eliminating the root causes of the problem. That approach should include women's equal and full participation as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Member States should vigorously pursue and ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Our recent history om conflict settlement includes success stories of women who have played a crucial role to that end.

On the other hand, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), all actors should take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. Coordinated and consolidated efforts are also necessary to prevent women and girls from becoming victims of human trafficking.

Turkey actively promotes the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in international platforms such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO. Furthermore, we support the empowerment and well-being of women and girls in various emergency, conflict or post-conflict situations through our comprehensive development assistance programme. The projects we carry out in Afghanistan and Somalia, particularly in the fields of education and health care, are concrete examples of our efforts to that end.

Turkey also exerts every effort to provide security and safety to Syrian women and girls who have fled the conflict in Syria. Today, Turkey hosts more than 2.7 million Syrians. We have provided Syrians with temporary protection status and enabled their access to the Turkish health system. So far, more than 170,000 Syrian babies have been born in medical facilities inside the temporary protection centres in Turkey. In those centres, we have taken steps to enable a gender-sensitive sheltering mechanism.

Multiple initiatives and programmes have been established to ensure prevention, participation, protection and education for women and girls. As an example, between 2013 and 2015 Turkey's humanitarian aid programme on eliminating and responding to gender-based violence for Syrian women and girls was conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund. Similar programmes regarding Syrian women and girls in Turkey will continue in the coming period. We believe that women and girls will have an important role to play in rebuilding Syria's future.

Lastly, I would like to mention that in Turkey, deliberations and efforts are under way towards drafting a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Mrs. Quiel Murcia (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by expressing our appreciation to the Russian presidency for its initiative of convening this timely open debate on women and peace and security.

Panama endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the Human Security Network.

We underscore the significant value of resolution 1325 (2000), which was adopted unanimously in 2000, as the first instrument to establish the relationship between the experiences of women in conflict and the international peace and security agenda, thereby focusing attention on their disproportionate impact on women. Today more than ever before, that resolution and subsequent Security Council resolutions are of great relevance, given the increasing violence against women and girls carried out by extremist groups that threaten their rights, dignity, integrity and lives.

The increasing role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in United Nations peacekeeping operations was enshrined in resolution 2242 (2015), which further encouraged women to take on greater leadership roles and promote their rights and called for efforts to turn plans made on paper into action, as we have heard this morning from the Executive Director of UN-Women.

We welcome the recommendations contained in the September report (A/71/398) of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the Secretary-General's call for the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy in response to instances of misconduct, in particular comprehensive proposals on prevention, enforcement and remedial measures to promote greater accountability, including his commitment to make public misconduct by United Nations staff. Today's multiple briefings, in particular the testimony of civil society representative Ms. Rita Lopidia, demonstrate that, unfortunately, the impact of armed conflict on women is disproportionately greater and thereby makes them more vulnerable and lacking sufficient protection.

Panama is firmly committed to promoting and protecting women's human rights. That is why we attach particular interest to the initiatives of UN-Women, of which my country is a member of the Executive Board, and to the Justice Rapid Response mechanism and the alliance of women seeking accountability for sexual and gender-based violence. The 2015 global review of the women and peace and security agenda highlighted the need to incorporate a more significant role of women in the fight against terrorism and radicalization, in which gender equality is assuming greater prominence for the fight against that scourge.

Violent extremism has intensified and degenerated into the worst forms of violence against women,

including sexual violence used as a weapon of war, thereby returning us to a time that we thought had been overcome by humankind. States must therefore strengthen collective efforts, including national plans and strategies to promote the increased participation of women in all stages of the peacebuilding process, as well as in post-conflict reconstruction.

I stress the significance of Spain's initiative to create a network of focal point groups on women and peace and security in September, which focuses on the urgent and crucial question of promoting women's leadership role and rights. The role that women can and should play in conflict prevention and resolution and decision-making processes aimed at sustainable peace is fundamental. That is why it is essential to empower women globally and continuously, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General.

Women's inclusion and equality are essential elements of the equation in achieving the development we want. We need to end the exclusion of 50 per cent of the world's population and recognize the active, vital role of women as agents of change, whose participation at all levels is an undeniably positive element favouring peaceful and constructive action.

The equal participation of 100 per cent of our population in every single step towards lasting peace and security will ultimately free up human potential to resolve the issues we face — all we need is the will to act. Given the current situation of ever-increasing global challenges, it is unacceptable to continue debating questions involving women's rights as leaders, or to hold high-ranking positions or to equitably participate at all levels of political, social or economic life.

Finally, the measures we take and implement today to defend the rights of women and girls will be steps towards saving humankind. That is in our hands.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the initiative of the Russian Federation in convening this open debate on woman and peace and security.

We acknowledge and express our appreciation for the briefings by the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UN-Women, as well as the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the Human Security Network.

We also align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2010).

The women and peace and security agenda is a priority of Chile's multilateral foreign policy. We therefore promote strengthening cooperation at regional and global levels and establishing public policies at country level. In the global context, we would like to point out our co-sponsorship of Spain's initiative to create a network of national focal points on women and peace and security. As a founding member of the network, Chile reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting and developing women's participation in decision-making in all spheres.

Accordingly, Chile is currently implementing its second national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) under the coordination of a tripartite inter-ministerial network to promote gender mainstreaming in all predeployment training for peacekeeping personnel from our country. The inter-ministerial bureau will soon be joined by citizen observer, whose task will be to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in Chile, with the participation of various stakeholders including civil society.

Furthermore, Chile is committed to increasing women's participation in various United Nations missions. We are convinced of their contribution and undeniable role in establishing effective ties in restoring the confidence of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. This year we have deployed a senior officer in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and 11 Chilean women will participate as observers in the United Nations Mission in Colombia. As of 2017, women's access will be ensured to all military professions. That will be extended in 2018 to include the navy and the air force. That will enable Chilean women to be deployed in various areas of peacekeeping missions.

At the regional level we highlight Chile and Argentina's bilateral plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) through the Joint Peace Force of the Southern Cross.

In another area, Chile appreciates the recommendations concerning the global study on resolution 1325 (2000) set out in the latest report (S/2016/822) of the Secretary-General. We emphasize the importance of enhancing the participation and

leadership of women as a central aspect of peace and security initiatives.

We should not just think about the numerical increase of women in peace operations, but should also include a gender perspective in the planning and conduct of missions. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, the participation of women should not be limited to certain phases; it is necessary throughout the conflict cycle to achieve sustainable peace.

Finally, women are agents of change and contribute to building more just and egalitarian societies. We must thererfore take advantage of their rich potential. As noted by the Secretary-General last year during his visit to Chile, empowering women and girls is the smartest investment that the international community can make to ensure a future of justice and peace for all.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mrs. Louise Sharene Bailey, Charge d'Affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mrs. Bailey: First and foremost, the African Union (AU) wishes to congratulate the President on his country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, as well as to thank him for convening this open debate on the theme "Women and peace and security, implementing the common agenda" as we celebrate the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful and comprehensive report (S/2016/822) and to commend the Executive Director of UN-Women and the Executive Director of EVE Organization for Women Development, South Sudan, for their valuable contributions to today's open debate.

In the same context as this debate, last Thursday the African Union Commission held its annual open meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council on the status of women and children in conflict, under the theme "the role of the media in enhancing accountability on women, peace and security commitments in Africa".

On the margins of the twenty-seventh African Union Summit, held in Kigali in July, the African Union launched the first report on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda in Africa. That was primarily the result of consultative meetings with AU States members and regional economic communities that have developed national action plans for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). So far, 19 countries and two regional economic communities in Africa have developed action plans.

Further to that report, the Commission embarked upon a continental results framework that will facilitate monitoring and reporting on the women and peace and security agenda item on a regular basis. Throughout the consultations conducted by the Special Envoy of the African Union Chairperson on women, peace and security, Her Excellency Ms. Bineta Diop, with AU member States, women's groups, partner United Nations agencies and other development partners, there was consensus that instruments do exist but that delivery on commitments is lacking.

Sixteen years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), in an endeavour to consolidate and accelerate the gains made by the continent in the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the African Union Commission is undertaking a number of activities guided by aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063, which stipulates, inter alia, that Africa will be a continent where women are empowered and play their rightful role in all spheres of life. One of the critical spheres is the area of peace and security as a sine qua non in Africa's stability and development. The undertakings include the following.

The first entails establishing a network of African women mediators to contribute to the search for a peaceful resolution of conflicts on the continent and to support communities in their peacebuilding efforts.

The second area of focus deals with changing the narratives on women to recognize their role in peacebuilding, through mobilization of a network of journalists, reporters and bloggers who are committed to reporting in a gender-responsive manner on issues of women and peace and security — not just by telling stories of victimization but also those of women's leadership and of women as positive agents for social change and economic transformation.

The third effort involves mobilizing and supporting member States and regional economic communities to develop action plans on the women and peace and security agenda. The Republic of Namibia and the Southern African Development Community region are presently undergoing the process, with the support of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

The fourth area entails launching a network of centres of excellence in various regions of the continent to work on women and peace and security issues, with a view to sustainable and broad strengthening of women's capacities in peacebuilding, thus ensuring the availability of women's expertise in that area.

The fifth action pertains to training military personnel on the rights of women, in line with the AU zero-tolerance policy on sexual and gender-based violence. Countries like Senegal have already embarked on such training.

It would be remiss of me not to take the opportunity at this juncture to salute and appreciate the support of dependable partners in assisting the African Union Commission in carrying out those activities to sustain the contribution of women in peace and security. Without being exhaustive, I wish to mention the support of UN-Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme Regional Service Centre for Africa and the countries of Norway, Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom for their invaluable contributions.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the African Union Commission's commitment and action towards the advancement of the women and peace and security agenda. An annual report will be submitted to the African Union Peace and Security Council, and subsequently shared with the United Nations Security Council. For the African Union Commission, the Africa we want is an Africa where all daughters and sons of the continent are equal, enjoy the same rights and obligations and participate equally in building a stable and just society. Women must be fully part and parcel of that endeavour and of Africa's transformative agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on the critical issue of women and peace and security. Since the high-level review of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) last year, we have seen some meaningful progress in many areas. The Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, his Special Envoys and UN-Women for their tireless dedication to those advances.

However, despite the progress we have achieved, we still face daunting challenges. There remains a wide gap between our expectations and the reality on the ground. Civilians, especially women and girls, continue to be caught up in armed conflicts around the world. Acts of sexual violence committed by non-State actors are particularly alarming. Bearing in mind our shared concerns, I would like to make a few observations, among others, on this important issue.

First, we must continue our efforts to integrate gender perspectives as we develop strategies for all stages of the conflict-solution process. In that vein, we recognize the increased number of female mediators and delegates in peace agreement negotiations, which has led to an increase in the number of agreements with gender-specific provisions. In fact, seven out of 10 peace agreements signed in 2015 had such provisions.

We also encourage the ongoing efforts to increase the number of women among military and police personnel deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The increased participation of women in the field, coupled with more gender advisers deployed to support related Secretariat efforts, will further promote a gender-responsive environment in peacekeeping. At the same time, it is also noteworthy that the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) met the target of allocating at least 15 per cent of its resources to projects designed to advance gender equality and the empower women.

Secondly, we need to further pursue accountability, which is key to the protection of women and girls in armed conflict. We commend the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which has continued to assist many Governments in strengthening the capacity of national justice systems, including in the areas of criminal investigations, prosecution and reparations for survivors.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of a Special Coordinator on Improving United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as well as the additional measures taken to strengthen accountability and assist victims. We believe that more determined actions need to be taken.

Thirdly, we would like to emphasize the indispensable role of national Governments in upholding the women and peace and security agenda. We welcome the fact that more countries are implementing national action plans, which contribute to strengthening national ability to implement the women and peace and security

agenda by enhancing societal awareness of the issue. We must pay more attention to building the capacity and awareness of national Governments in conflict and post-conflict settings in order to pursue women's equality and active participation through an enhanced partnership with all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea, as a strong supporter of this agenda, reaffirms its commitment to international efforts to accelerate the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al Musharakh (United Arab Emirates): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on women and peace and security and for highlighting this priority issue. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful presidency of the Security Council this month. We join others in thanking the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, for her briefing and offer our continuing support to UN-Women in its role in advancing this agenda. We would like to reiterate her call for efforts to achieve gender parity in the United Nations. We look forward to working with the Secretary-General-designate on this critical agenda item.

In addition, we would like to thank Ms. Rita Lopidia for sharing her expertise on the important role of women in all phases of the peace process in South Sudan.

As a member of the Group of Friends on Women and Peace and Security, the United Arab Emirate's would also like to endorse the Group's joint statement.

One year has passed since we marked the 15-year anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2242 (2015), co-sponsored by nearly 70 Member States. As a co-sponsor of the resolution and a strong advocate of the women and peace and security agenda, the United Arab Emirates is committed to building a strong framework for action to achieve the full implementation of the agenda.

In following up last year's commitments, the task at hand is a challenging one in view of the global threats to peace and security. Terrorism and extremism are real threats, and violations of women's rights, as well as sexual violence against women, are intrinsically linked with the strategic objectives and ideologies of extremist groups. United Nations-led investigations have uncovered the use of sexual and gender-based crimes by Da'esh and Boko Haram as tactics of those terrorist and extremist groups. We have all seen the widespread targeting of women and girls in conflict zones, which represents a fundamental push-back against women's rights. The scale and protracted nature of the forced displacement crisis are growing, with 12.4 million new cases of displacement driven by conflict and persecution in 2015 alone. That brings the total number of people in dire need of protection and assistance as a consequence of forced displacement to 65.2 million, 50 per cent of whom are women and girls.

We know that the global landscape is challenging, but the international community has made tangible gains in the past year, in partnership with United Nations. First, the women and peace and security national focal point network, spearheaded by Spain, will drive the coordination and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the national level. As a founding member of that network, the United Arab Emirates is committed to translating the women and peace and security agenda domestically.

Secondly, the League of Arab States and UN-Women hosted a ministerial conference in Cairo last month on women achieving peace and security in the Arab Region. That conference facilitated the implementation of the regional strategy and action plan on resolution 1325 (2000) and adopted a number of resolutions on financing and monitoring mechanisms in order to enhance accountability and ensure serious commitment to achieving the goals of the women and peace and security agenda.

Thirdly, the Security Council now hosts the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, led by the United Kingdom and Spain, which focuses on country-specific situations in order to mainstream gender considerations. But it is not enough to merely turn the tide. As an international community, and particularly at the United Nations, we are attempting to shift how the system operates in order to place greater focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the policy level. That is something that we will continue to strive to achieve as an international player committed to the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda.

One of the founding principles of the United Arab Emirates is the full, meaningful and continually improving participation of women in every aspect

of our society. In recognition of that core belief, the United Arab Emirates foreign policy strategy now includes women's empowerment and protection as priority themes. In recognition of the key role that UN-Women plays in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, the United Arab Emirates and UN-Women opened a UN-Women Liaison Office in Abu Dhabi just last week. The Office will enhance and strengthen collaboration to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls — a core part of any women and peace and security agenda in the region.

As a sponsor of resolution 2242 (2015), the United Arab Emirates recognizes the need to integrate gender analysis into the drivers of radicalization for women, while also considering the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations. This requires a strong research base, so that our policies are data-driven and effective. The United Arab Emirates is contributing to that research base by supporting the UN-Women global programme on women and peace and security in order to promote conflict resilient societies through prevention efforts that facilitate women's participation, leadership and the protection of their rights. The global programme will further gender-sensitive research and data collection to reveal the drivers of extremist violence and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's rights and women's organizations.

The United Arab Emirates is also committed to combating extremism through the Sawab Centre, an online messaging and engagement programme, developed in partnership with the United States, in support of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. Sawab uses direct online engagement to counter terrorist propaganda rapidly and effectively, including the messages used to recruit foreign fighters, raise funds for illicit activities and intimidate and terrorize local populations. In November 2015, Sawab launched a campaign entitled "Da'esh denies her dignity" to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The campaign told the stories of five women who escaped Da'esh through video testimonials and visual depictions of their treatment. Two of those women are Yazidi and describe how they were treated as less than human, beaten, and sold in slave markets over and over again.

Resolution 2242 (2015) makes the critical link between the women and peace and security agenda and humanitarian action, recognizing the impact of forced displacement on women and girls, while emphasizing their roles as first-line responders and the necessity of engaging women in the design, delivery and implementation of humanitarian responses. The United Arab Emirates is doing its part to address the global humanitarian crisis, in which women, children and adolescents are often hit the first and hardest, and helped last, and 50 per cent of preventable maternal, under-five, and newborn deaths occur in humanitarian settings.

The United Arab Emirates continues to be a steadfast advocate of the Every Woman Every Child Everywhere platform. That platform recognizes the disproportionate impact that humanitarian and fragile settings have on women, children and adolescents, and the role that women and young people play as front-line responders. They are not only key for the survival and well-being of children, families and communities, but also to build resilience and facilitate the transition from crises to development.

The women and peace and security agenda is key to achieving sustainable peace and driving operational effectiveness. With that in mind, I would like to make three recommendations.

First, we must bring women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts. Women are transformative agents of change. By removing obstacles and incentivizing the effective participation of women in peace and security, we can strengthen the sustainability and inclusiveness of our peace and security efforts. That includes increasing the leadership of women at senior decision-making levels here at the United Nations. Secondly, we must prioritize the protection of women's and girls' rights during and after conflict. Thirdly, we must address the humanitarian crisis with the understanding that women are best placed to advise and lead on humanitarian responses.

The United Arab Emirates is committed to prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings. We will continue to advocate for the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of leadership and decision-making, and working towards the full realization of the women and peace and security agenda.

Mr. Marzooq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Council this month

and for the transparent manner in which it conducts the work of the Security Council. I would also like to thank New Zealand for its tremendous efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

Iraq is one of the earliest countries to being implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Notwithstanding the challenges and difficulties that the country faces and the terrorist attacks of Da'esh, Iraq is developing an effective national action plan to implement the resolution. A special operations room has been established in the Prime Minister's Office to implement resolution-related plans, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Iraq is working to ensure women's participation in public life and raises awareness among the population about women's social, economic and political rights, promotes gender equality through an equal opportunities policy and encourages women to take up posts and participate in decision-making processes. Women taking up high-ranking positions has increased since 2003. We now have 83 women parliamentarians, three women ambassadors and 86 judges and Iraqi women are now the presidents and deans of 75 universities and colleges and cabinet ministers in an Iraqi State inhabited by 7 million people. Sustainable development can be achieved only when there is an environment of peace and security.

Iraq is witnessing the most violent terrorist attacks in the world perpetrated by lethal terrorist groups. The people in the areas under the control of such gangs have experienced the most savage and horrendous criminal practices committed against, in particular, women and children. Such gangs and groups have kidnapped a huge number of Yazidi women and people from other ethnicities of all ages in Iraq, whohave been sold as chattel in the areas between Iraq and Syria. Their dignities have been humiliated. They have been raped, enslaved and tortured psychologically, physically and sexually. We therefore call on the international community to make further efforts to support Iraq, free these women, return them to their families and reintegrate them into society.

My Government, in coordination with international organizations, is monitoring and addressing violations taking place during counterterrorism operations. It is training women and involving them in all steps of the war against terrorism. Collective efforts undertaken by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations led to the signing of a joint statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Bangura, on 23 September, on the sidelines of the high-level meetings of the General Assembly.

The advancement of women is a huge step towards achieving peace and security. Iraq is continuously cooperating with international organizations to promote women's advancement, to expand women's role and empowerment, and to enable women to assume their role in society. The Government is cooperating with the Gender Unit of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to enhance the role of women in national reconciliation and to raise awareness about the importance of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start by thanking the Russian Federation for its efforts in the framework of its presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you, Sir, every possible success at the head of the Council. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (S/2016/822). We welcome the recommendations contained therein.

We reaffirm the importance of women's full participation in efforts to achieve peace and security and the ensuring that the necessary resources and funds are available to implement these programmes. We are here today to assess the efforts of the international community, in terms not only of the settlement of conflict, but also of the empowerment of women in the context of forging of lasting peace. We are also here to assess women's role in peace negotiations, the prevention of conflict, humanitarian assistance and the fight against extremism.

We are pursuing our efforts to strengthen the participation of women in decision-making and have made qualitative progress, as reflected in the results of the most recent parliamentary elections, which were held in September. The number of women in Parliament has increased from 12 to 24 per cent and 18 per cent of our magistrates are now women. There are also a great many Jordanian women who hold high positions.

Jordan is a pioneer regionally and internationally in its contributions to peace and security. We are a troop-contributing country and participate in dialogue and mediation efforts. Jordan is one of the largest contributors of troops to the United Nations. We also contribute police to peacekeeping missions, including 21 Jordanian women, and the number of women participating in such missions will grow. This clearly underscores the importance we attach to strengthening the role of women in peacekeeping operations.

We would like to stress the importance of adopting and taking this aspect into account in peacekeeping operations. Jordan continues to suffer from an unprecedented flow of refugees, including Syrian refugees, but despite the social, economic and security burden that this places on us and the chronic lack of water and electricity, Jordan is committed to sparing no effort to provide protection and basic services to Syrian refugees, including female refugees, who constitute 51 per cent of refugees in the Kingdom. This is in keeping with the priorities for women and peace and security and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As members know, the Security Council recently adopted resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, following the call of his Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II in favour of a strengthening of the participation of youth in peace efforts. Youth are drivers of peace and they contribute to the fight against violent extremism and their participation in decision-making must be strengthened.

The Government of Jordan has committed itself to drafting a national plan for women and peace and security and to accelerating its adoption. Indeed, we firmly believe that the main victims of conflict are women and girls. Women play an essential role in forging peace, and peace cannot be established in societies without the serious and concrete participation of women. Similarly, we cannot implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without empowering women and girls, achieving gender equality and, of course, eradicating all forms of discrimination.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women, in cooperation with UN-Women and other bodies, has organized participative consultations, bringing together all relevant stakeholders and actors, including communities hosting refugees. These consultations have underscored the need to strengthen the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and to enhance the training provided and to fight against violence against women, which is often rooted in social causes.

Official bodies, civil society and international organizations all provide various forms of assistance in Jordan with the objective of eliminating the violence and discrimination aimed at marginalized and discriminated populations. A great many projects managed by women deployed in refugee camps and communities hosting refugees also enjoy our support. Jordan is working alongside the international community to counter extremism by all means and to fight against the exploitation of women and girls by Da'esh and other similar organizations.

In conclusion, Jordan will continue to work at all levels to strengthen the United Nations programme on women and peace and security in order to provide a better future to refugee women and girls. The international community must also mitigate the suffering of women and girls under Israeli occupation, including those detained in Israeli prisons. Their rights must be upheld. We must also work hand in hand to build peace in post-conflict situations and to eradicate the causes of conflict. Women play a very important role in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to start by expressing our appreciation to the Russian presidency for convening this meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN-Women and the representative of civil society for their briefings on this theme.

Ethiopia welcomes the progress made in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work of the Security Council since the adoption of the groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. The establishment of the women and peace and security normative framework to protect women affected by conflict and enhance their effective participation at all levels in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts is indeed a step in the right direction.

Nevertheless, we recognize the existing implementation gaps in the women and peace and security normative architecture identified in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations

and through the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Without any doubt, more needs to be done to advance the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, we note with great concern the heightened risk of violence or threats to the physical safety of women and their exposure to sexual abuse or harassment in conflict and post-conflict situations.

We believe that the sustained engagement of the Council, without encroaching on the mandate of other United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, is critical in pushing forward the women and peace and security agenda. In that regard, the efforts of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established pursuant to the 2015 high-level review, aimed at ensuring the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and other subsequent resolutions, continue to be very important. Most important, mainstreaming the women and peace and security agenda requires effective coordination and consistent engagement among the relevant stakeholders, including among UN-Women, Special representatives of the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and troop- and police contributing countries, among many others. In that vein, a coordinated reporting mechanism could also be envisaged to monitor the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and highlight the protection challenges, with a view to providing the necessary assistance to conflict-affected countries.

As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Ethiopia has been working towards increasing the participation of women. We are particularly proud that Ethiopia is one of the leading contributors of female peacekeepers. We will continue to enhance the participation of our women in the military, police and civilian components.

I wish to conclude my remarks by reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*) I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mikayilli (Azerbaijan): We would like to express our appreciation to the Russian presidency for convening this open debate and to thank all the briefers for their valuable contributions.

The consequences of armed conflict and violence, as well as the erosion of respect for international humanitarian and international human rights law, continue to have a devastating impact on millions of women and girls across the globe. We are deeply alarmed by the current displacement crisis and the wide range of violations that displaced people are facing. Effective protection measures in situations of displacement are required. In that context, the importance of gender-responsive approaches to refugee and migrant movements, as advocated by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/822), cannot be overemphasized.

The growing spread of violent extremism and terrorism also causes unspeakable suffering to women and girls. As it was highlighted during the Security Council open debate (see S/PV.7704) on conflict related sexual violence held in June, sexual violence is now also used as a tactic of terrorism. Moreover, restricting women's rights in conflict settings through the misappropriation of religion has become widespread and is a very dangerous development. It is therefore crucial to integrate the gender perspective while putting in place strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Access to education in crisis situations is vital not only in addressing the gender gap in school enrolment, but also for the empowerment of women and girls. We are encouraged by the commitment set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1) to provide all children with education within a few months of their arrival.

We strongly condemn all acts of violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict. Parties to conflict should respect their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law and bring the perpetrators to justice to combat impunity and ensure accountability. In the same vein, we support ongoing measures to prevent and address cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We welcome the contribution that landmark resolution 1325 (2000) has made to an increased recognition of the plight of women and girls in situations of armed conflict. In particular, the inclusion of the protection of civilians in the mandates of peacekeeping operations; the incorporation of women- and peace- and security-related provisions to peace agreements; the appointment of women as mediators, special representatives, special envoys and heads of missions; the increase in the number of female military

and police personnel in United Nations missions; the establishment of the post of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the adoption of national action plans on women and peace and security; and the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can all be highlighted.

The suffering of millions of women and girls cannot be alleviated without putting an end to armed conflicts. That is a reality that we are facing in Azerbaijan every day. As it is well-documented by the United Nations and the Security Council, Armenia has unleashed a war and used force against Azerbaijan, occupied almost one fifth of its territory, carried out ethnic cleansing and committed other serious crimes during the conflict. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani forcibly displaced persons are still deprived of the right to return to their homes. Regular ceasefire violations and attacks on Azerbaijani towns and villages have recently become more frequent and violent, resulting in the killing or injuring of many Azerbaijani civilians. The most recent large-scale attack by the Armenian armed forces took place in April and claimed the lives of innocent civilians within the population of Azerbaijan. The April escalation was a vivid reminder that the status quo is dangerous and has the potential to re-escalate at any time, with unpredictable consequences.

In that regard, we fully support the call of the Secretary-General to redouble efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, allowing for the realization of a more peaceful world.

The President (*spoke in Russian*) I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal): I would like to thank the Russian presidency of the Security Council for conveying today's open debate and to thank today's briefers.

Portugal is encouraged by several very positive developments with regard to the women and peace and security agenda, such as the fact that the issue is a consistent feature in Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping mandates, as well as the fact that gender-sensitive reporting is now understood as a fundamental element for a thorough understanding of the gender dimensions of conflict and that reinforced efforts are necessary to shape adequate responses at the local and international levels. Today more women are included in peace talks, more peace agreements contain provisions in support of women's human rights and more security-sector personnel are trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.

However, since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the peace and security context and the nature of conflict have evolved — at times dramatically — characterized by entrenched cycles of conflict and fragility, daily violations of human rights and humanitarian law, growing humanitarian crises, mass-scale displacement of persons and refugees, and new threats, such as increasing violent extremism and terrorism, which disproportionately affect women and girls.

The women and peace and security agenda is a critical, yet underutilized, tool for preventing conflict and shaping more effective responses to today's complex crises. That is why it is now more than ever essential to sustain and develop the progress already achieved and maintain the commitment to the agenda by Member States, regional organizations and the entire United Nations system. In that regard, Portugal welcomes the settomg up of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established pursuant to the 2015 high-level review, as a key step in the implementation of resolution 2242 (2015) with a view to strengthen oversight and coordination on the women and peace and security agenda. We would also like to commend Spain for its initiative in the establishment of the national focal point network for women and peace and security, which constitutes an important platform for sharing good practices, and with which Portugal is pleased to be associated.

Portugal has been a firm and consistent supporter of the women and peace and security agenda. We adopted our first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2009, and a second one in 2014, which is in force until 2018. We consider it critical to ensure the active and meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects and stages of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict processes. We will continue to promote the women and peace and security agenda and to raise awareness on the importance of establishing national actions plans on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all the relevant international forums we belong to, including the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and NATO.

Portugal also reiterates its pledge to continue conducting training programmes for national personnel and members of the armed and security forces assigned to international peacekeeping missions on gender equality and violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings.

I would also like to point out the important role of civil society organizations in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. They are often essential elements in preventing and reporting crimes committed against women, young women and girls and in alerting the international community to such crimes. Working in close collaboration with civil society organizations therefore becomes indispensable to enhance the results.

In conclusion, 16 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we must redouble our efforts in consolidating and reinforcing the implementation of this agenda. Ensuring a gender perspective and women and girls' participation in all stages of peace processes, including in prevention and disarmament, protection in displacement settings, peacekeeping, policy-making and reconstruction, strengthens the protection efforts by United Nations peacekeepers, contributes positively to the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery and development and helps counter violent extremism.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Malenga (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, I would like to begin by commending your country, the Russian Federation, on its accession to the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to commend you on the great acumen with which you are conducting the Council's work in October. I would also like to pay well-deserved tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to whom my country is very grateful for his outstanding ongoing efforts to ensure that peace returns to my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also take this opportunity to thank Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, for her noteworthy commitments in fighting sexual violence in my country. I would also like to express gratitude to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, for her support to the women of my country. I also thank Ms. Rita Lopidia Executive Director and Co-founder of EVE Organization for Women Development, for her enlightening briefing.

My country endorses the statement delivered by the observer of the African Union.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been affected by many years of armed conflict with very adverse consequences, in particular on women and children, is firmly committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Adopted on 31 October 2000 — the first Council resolution to emphasize the fight against the impact of war — resolution 1325 (2000) called for promoting women's contributions to conflict resolution and to negotiations with a view to the maintenance of peace and security.

It was in 1966, 50 years ago now, that for the first time a woman was elevated to the rank of minister in my country. That was the beginning of a process of liberating Congolese women from the traditional yoke in order that they could participate in decision-making positions. That process culminated with the promulgation of the 2006 Constitution by the President of the Republic and Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange.

This open debate gives us an opportunity to take stock of the progress made since our country endorsed resolution 1325 (2000). By way of example, I would mention the following achievements: the participation of women in all peace negotiations at national and international levels; the integration of the gender dimension in all areas of national life via the promulgation of a law on promoting and and upholding women's right to equal representation and on guaranteeing a gender balance in our institutions; and reforms of the police and the armed forces, including the setting up of specialized units responsible for fighting sexual violence.

We have also reviewed our family code, which in the past had discriminated against women and young girls, in favour of giving rights to both. Our President recently promulgated the code. We are currently reviewing our national strategy against gender-based sexual violence, with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders. We drafted and published a national action plan, adopted by the Government in October 2010, which we are reviewing at this time. Every year on 31 October,

we evaluate the activities undertaken to implement the action plan — a day set aside to commemorate the resolution, with the collaboration of civil society and development partners. Finally, we have put in place a number of structural mechanisms — for example, setting up national, provincial and local steering committees and a permanent national secretariat — to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all 26 provinces of our country.

Notwithstanding that progress, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) still faces major challenges, such as illiteracy, early marriage and inadequate human, material and financial resources. Aware of those difficulties, my Government, through its Ministry on Women, Family and Children, has made a strong commitment, with the support of technical and financial development partners, to bolster synergy among all stakeholders to effectively implement resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), which aim to increase women's prominence in the peace processes of our respective countries. The challenge is to promote the rights of women and young girls and to encourage all initiatives that will help to achieve the expected results set forth in resolution 1325 (2000).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago is pleased to contribute to this open debate on the sixteenth anniversary of the women amd peace and security agenda and one year after the global study on resolution 1325 (2000). It is also noteworthy that this debate comes one year after the international community adopted the most comprehensive universal agenda for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This debate provides a valuable opportunity for us to take stock of how far we have come in our implementation efforts, particularly as it relates to Goal 5, on women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as Goal 16 which speaks to peaceful and inclusive societies, which mirror the subject of this debate. We have, after all, committed to leaving no one behind.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the topic, and we echo his words as stated in the report:

> "The women and peace and security agenda is a critical, yet underutilized tool for preventing conflict and shaping more effective responses to today's complex crises." (*S/2016/822, para. 4*)

In that respect, we are reminded that the paramount importance of the United Nations lies in the maintenance of international peace and security. As the nature of threats to international security continues to evolve in complexity, my delegation submits that the primary objective of our Organization would be elusive without the full and effective integration of women into all spheres of conflict resolution, conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes. Trinidad and Tobago is fully committed to the goal of gender equality. For us, the empowerment of women is an integral part of national development and an essential pillar in the maintenance of sustainable peace.

Trinidad and Tobago is steadfast in its implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2010, my country introduced, and has been the main sponsor since then, of the first General Assembly resolution entitled "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control" (General Assembly resolution 69/61). It must be highlighted that the catalyst for the resolution on women and disarmament in 2010 was the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Since its introduction, the resolution has received the support of a majority of Member States and is currently being considered again in the First Committee. The resolution transcends the notion of women as victims of armed conflict and armed violence and recognizes women as empowered and indispensable actors in decision-making efforts to address the issue of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Trinidad and Tobago is pleased that the language contained in the current and last versions of the resolution on women and disarmament is reflective of the Arms Trade Treaty and its provisions on gender-based violence and violence against women and girls.

At the national level, the equal rights of women and men are guaranteed under the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. Equal opportunities exist for women's participation at the decision-making level in matters regarding peace and security. That is underscored by the recruitment and ascendency of women to senior ranks of the security sector in Trinidad and Tobago. At the regional level, we have also worked with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on initiatives to strengthen the participatory role played by Latin America and the Caribbean in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to host a number of initiatives, in conjunction the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to provide disarmament and arms control training to security personnel, including women. My country pledges its commitment to continue to work with the United Nations in advancing and empowering women at the global level. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago was elected to the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in April. We are eager to begin our mandate in January 2017 and to join international efforts to promote the advancement of women and girls everywhere.

Trinidad and Tobago takes the opportunity to reaffirm its continued commitment to the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): At the outset, my delegation extends to the Russian presidency our great appreciation for convening this open debate on the very important theme of women and peace and security.

My delegation appreciates the efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in promoting the mainstreaming of gender equality and empowerment. We welcome the briefing he gave this morning, as well as that delivered by the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. We also take note of the briefing made Ms. Rita Lopidia, Executive Director of the EVE Organization for Women Development in South Sudan.

Uganda joins other Member States in reiterating the concerns the international community continues to have in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Women continue to face numerous challenges, but most specifically their plight is even more debilitating during conflicts and wars. More often than not, they are not the causes but mere victims and bear the greatest brunt of the excesses of such conflicts. Women and girls have endured some of the greatest acts of humiliation by being subjected to such degrading acts as rape and other forms of sexual violence and abuse during conflicts. In most instances, sexual exploitation, violence and abuse are even used as weapons of war. United Nations reports are awash with many such acts in many conflicts and war situations all over the world, including in Africa. Conflicts and wars have registered many widows and orphans, the most vulnerable of whom are girls. In the same vein, women continue to be sidelined and marginalized in conflict management and resolution, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peace support operations.

We commend the United Nations for some deliberate actions taken so far to address those challenges and for the implementation of some aspects of resolution 1325 (2000). However, a lot of work still needs to be done. We therefore call for the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We note with appreciation the recognition of the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/822) of Uganda as an outstanding example of a country that has demonstrated that women are making a remarkable difference as agents of change. In local districts under the localization programme, Uganda, facilitated by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, has adopted local action plans that have resulted in a decrease in sexual and gender-based violence.

The question of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations must be seriously addressed and those who commit such crimes should be held to account for their actions. Uganda is exemplary in that respect. Not long ago, some Uganda People's Defence Force members serving in the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia were identified for transgressions and were duly tried before a court of law, both in the Mission area and at home. Those found culpable were severely punished for their actions.

In order to address the question of gender balance and gender mainstreaming in a holistic manner, Uganda has made tremendous strides in empowering women and girls through not only the provision of universal primary and secondary education, but also the introduction of affirmative action in admissions to tertiary institutions in the country. That has greatly enabled more women to acquire the necessary education that empowers them with the required skills and knowledge to compete with men in various aspects of life, both internally and globally.

In politics and governance, more women have been able to be elected to the national legislature and other Government legislative institutions due to the deliberate Government policy of affirmative action of reserving

certain positions for women alone, in addition to their ability to compete with men in other positions. More female members have also been appointed to the national Cabinet in Government. The Government of Uganda is committed to continue exploring more opportunities in the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We wish to call upon the United Nations to involve more women in preventive diplomacy, negotiations and mediation to promote gender balance in these areas.

Last but not least is the question of gender budgeting that must take into account the special needs of women in the domain of peacekeeping and support operations. Working together through and within the United Nations system, we should continue to promote the equal and effective participation of women in all efforts aimed at the promotion of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union. Allow me to make the following additional points.

First, women's networks play an important early warning and preventive role. These include women's situation rooms in Africa, which the African Union (AU) has declared a best practice to prevent conflict; the Au initiative to build a dedicated roster of women mediators; and the creation of the Nordic Women's Mediators' Network. Existing good practices should be emulated and encouraged. We call on the United Nations to consider developing a dedicated roster of women mediators to reinforce inclusive, multi-track prevention and mediation processes, and on countries to submit more women mediator candidacies to United Nations rosters.

Secondly, women suffer disproportionately from the effects of armed violence in conflicts. They are killed, robbed, raped, trafficked and forced into prostitution at gunpoint. Women also bear the brunt of armed violence as single heads of households and caregivers. Their needs as ex-combatants and former child soldiers differ from those of their male counterparts.

The Arms Trade Treaty has had an important impact on highlighting the gender dimension of arms control and disarmament. As reflected in resolution 2220 (2015), my delegation urges further strengthening of the gender dimension in tackling the issue of small arms and light weapons. Ensuring women's full and meaningful participation in efforts to combat and eradicate the illicit transfer and misuse of small arms and light weapons must remain a priority. NATO and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council guidelines on implementing resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, regarding small arms and light weapons and mine action is a good example in that respect. We also support the Secretary-General's call to strengthen gender-responsive approaches to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, further integrating the gender dimension into relevant processes.

Thirdly, although human rights violations targeting women increasingly figure in sanctions regimes, only five of these, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/822), explicitly include as designation criteria acts involving sexual violence or violations targeting women. We stress the need to reinforce the gender expertise of relevant expert groups, further enhance sanctions regimes' cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and expand the designation criteria in sanctions regimes where sexual and gender-based crimes and specific attacks against women are persistently perpetrated.

Fourthly, communication can be a powerful tool for promoting the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. The ways in which women are depicted in the media can have a profound effect on societal attitudes, perceptions of gender roles, and the effective tackling of stereotypes that constrain and limit women's role and opportunities in all spheres of life.

However, according to the *Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*, women are the central focus of just 10 per cent of news stories, mostly as victims. Only 4 per cent of media stories clearly challenge gender stereotypes. Improving women's chances to have their side of the story told as media protagonists and media makers, through better education and access to information, media, literacy, social, organizational and communication skills should be part and parcel of all United Nations-led operations and programmes on the ground. This would, inter alia, allow us to better challenge constraining inhibitions, inspire courage, affirm the right of women to take the lead and offer inspiring real-life role models to other women and girls

who are still struggling to have their rights and human dignity taken into account.

Female journalists may offer particular insights into the plight of women in conflict zones by accessing women where access may not be possible to their male counterparts due to prevailing restrictions and social norms. Female journalists also produce more stories centered on women than their male counterparts. As such, they become important conduits for the women and peace and security agenda. But women journalists themselves often face serious risks as they seek to tell the stories of conflict and transformation. A shocking 70 per cent of women journalists killed worldwide are murdered. Besides physical attacks, intimidation, harassment and rape, they are subjected to aggressive targeted trolling and sexualized attacks online. Resolution 2222 (2015), adopted under Lithuanian presidency in May 2015, points to the specific risks faced by women journalists. These need to be adequately addressed, including through a much stronger focus on tackling impunity.

Finally, let me reiterate Lithuania's strong commitment to furthering the women and peace and security agenda through concrete action. We are currently renewing our resolution 1325 (2000) national action plan and enhancing relevant cooperation with our eastern partnership neighbours, including Ukraine, where Russia-sponsored war in the east of the country has severely affected women's personal safety and their human rights. Lithuania is taking steps to increase the involvement of women in peace operations in the civilian and military fields. Last year, a third of our personnel deployed to civilian missions abroad were women.

As a founding member of the women and peace and security national focal point network, Lithuania will continue to engage actively in its work as well as on the broader women and peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Allow me to congratulate the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We thank you for organizing this open debate on women and peace and security.

Cambodia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this morning.

In the twenty-first century, it is more evident than ever that women play an integral part in our global efforts in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and providing humanitarian response. This is reflected in the resolution 1325 (2000), supported by the reports of the Secretary-General and other United Nations resolutions.

Women are an integral part of global society and therefore should be no longer overlooked. We are currently witnessing changes in how peace is defined. Peace does not mean only the absence of war, but can also be sustained through a more inclusive political process that includes the upholding of justice, reconciliation and the promotion of human rights. In this regard, it is worth looking at the analysis and recommendations in the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Women represent a strong link in the chain that supports the most vulnerable members of society. Women's perseverance and kind virtues take their role beyond the home as they play an important role in peacebuilding processes. It is unfortunate that women and girls have been recent targets in many areas of conflict. The more we lack key female participation, the more our chances to sustain peace are diminished. Therefore, it is mandatory for the United Nations to look into the overall aspects of peacebuilding, including female key players. The significance of these criteria mean that their adoption should be a prerequisite for the implementation of the common agenda on women and peace and security.

In the President's concept paper (S/2016/871, annex), we are asked to share experiences and information regarding the efforts of Member States and relevant entities in response to the 2015 high-level review and global study. In light of this, I wish to highlight the following points from the perspective of Cambodia.

Member States with women having suffered from violence must be given the right support for their basic needs so that women and their dependent children can be reintegrated into the society, with consideration for increased investment in the educational needs of girls and women. Health-wise, specific physical, mental and psychological health services should be provided to

violence-stricken women so as to restore their dignity and establish a collective memory.

In recognizing women as the backbone of the country, it is important to build and strengthen international norms conducive to giving women equal rights in order to encourage their full participation in all spheres of activities, including political, economic, social and cultural pursuits through the integration of international legal instruments by the respective Member States.

In order to enhance our efforts to end gender-based discrimination, stronger national and regional legal instruments should be strengthened so as to provide a greater number of high-level posts for women. Empowering and protection are not only in the interests of women themselves, but also in the interests of the common good. Cambodia has therefore ensured a greater number of women are employed in positions of influence, particularly in the civil service and State institutions, with a shift from 20 to 50 per cent in female employment in those areas in 2016. Cambodia has also pursued ways to increase its female recruits, as we recognize that their professional skills and talents can benefit peace processes in the world, and we are increasing their participation, thereby advocating equal participation, in international forums. Since 2006 we have deployed 142 women out of our 3,800 Cambodian United Nations peacekeepers.

In conclusion, Cambodia strongly commits to increasing momentum in the area of gender equality, empowering women and realizing their rights. We are continuing to work closely with the relevant ministries, civil society organizations and the private sector, as well as with our development partners.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.